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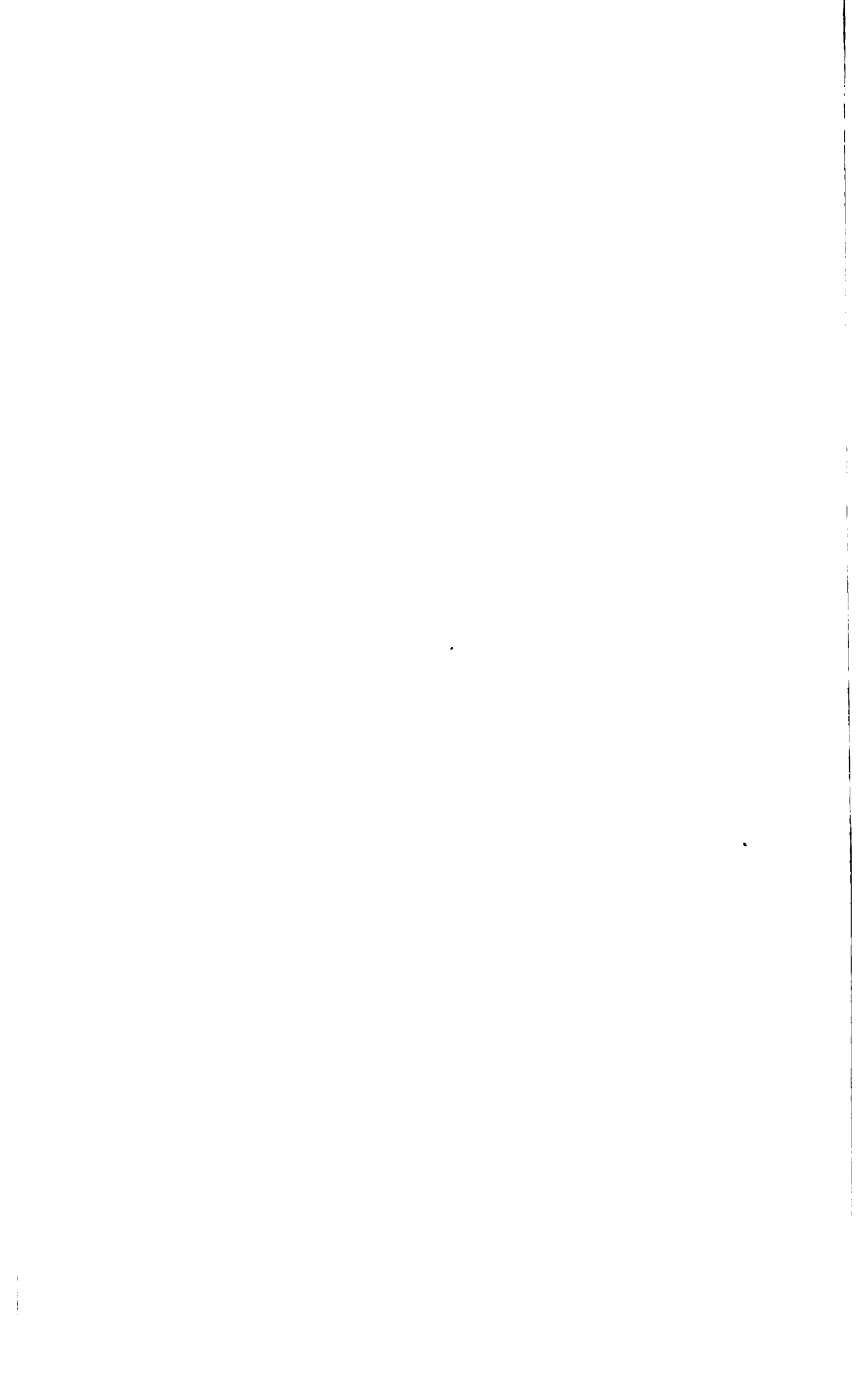
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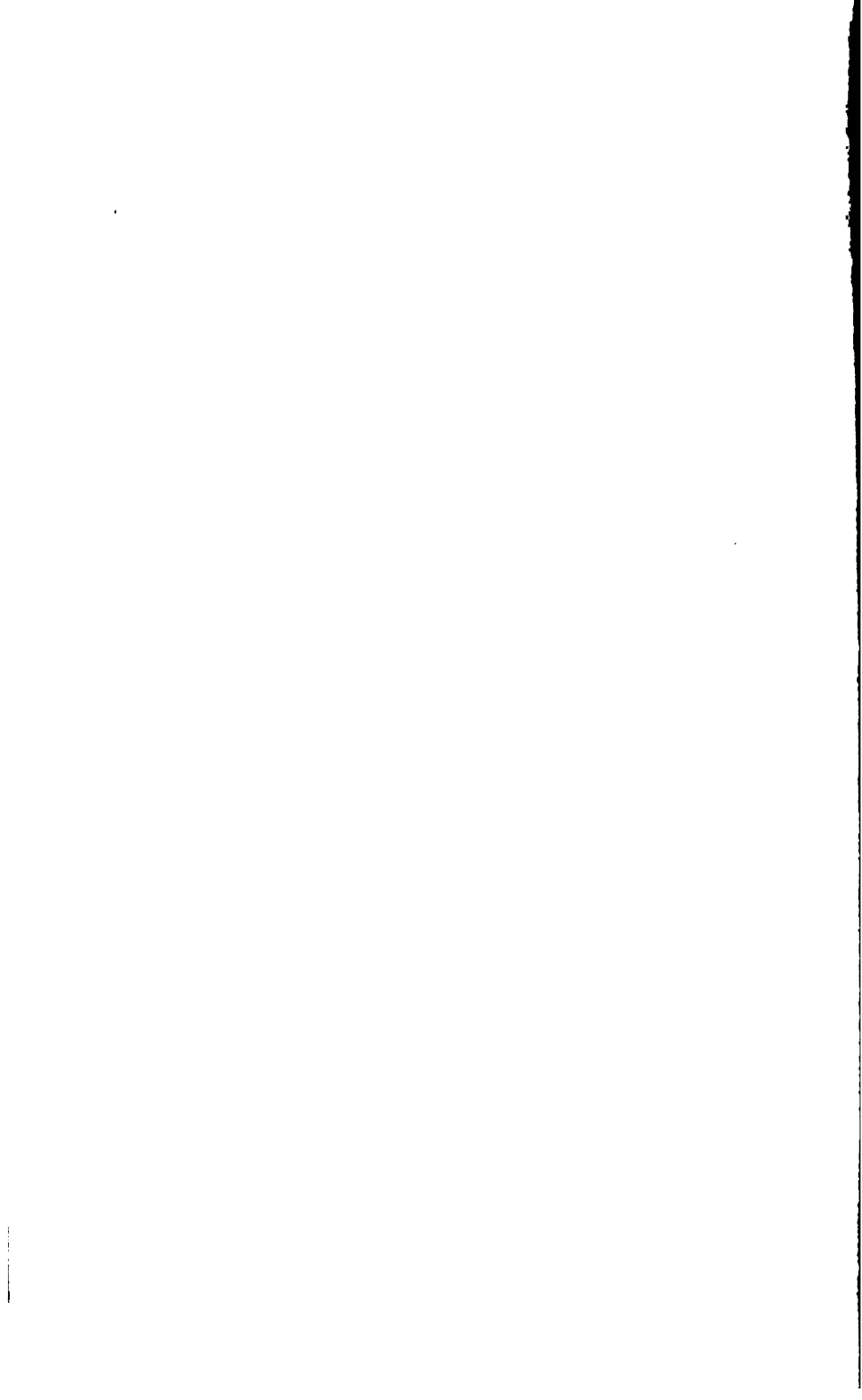
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A ROYAL FAMILY

A COMEDY IN FIVE ACTS

BY
EDWARD MERRILL

ROBERT CARPENTIER

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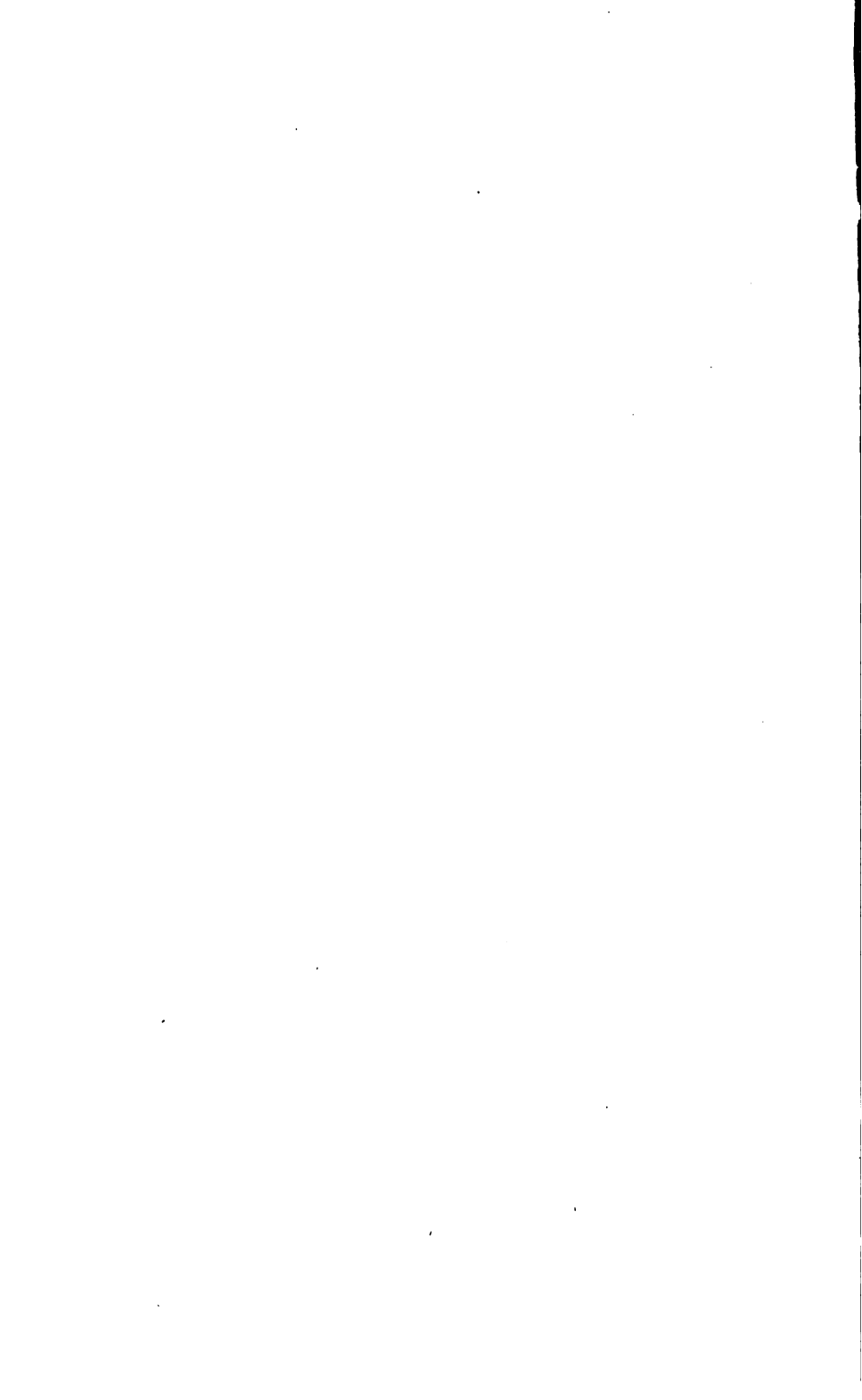


1st Issue



A ROYAL FAMILY







A ROYAL FAMILY

A COMEDY OF ROMANCE IN
THREE ACTS

BY
ROBERT MARSHALL
• •

LONDON
PRINTED AT THE CHISWICK PRESS

1904

LOAN STACK



CHARACTERS.

Original Cast.

LOUIS VII, King of Arcacia . . MR. ERIC LEWIS.
 PRINCE CHARLES FERDINAND,
 his only son, a boy of seven. . MASTER DENNY.
 PRINCE VICTOR CONSTANTINE,
 Crown Prince of Kurland . . MR. PAUL ARTHUR.
 THE DUKE OF BERASCON, A.D.C.
 to the King MR. JAMES ERSKINE.
 THE COUNT VERENSA, Prime
 Minister of Arcacia MR. PATTERSON.
 BARON HOLDENSEN, Chief Com-
 missioner of Police MR. AUBREY FITZGERALD.
 THE CARDINAL CASANO, Cardinal
 Archbishop of Caron MR. DION BOUCICAULT.
 FATHER ANSELM, his secretary . MR. MARSH ALLEN.
 QUEEN MARGARET, Queen-Con-
 sort of Arcacia MISS ADA BRANSON.
 THE QUEEN FERDINAND, mother
 of King Louis MRS. CHARLES CALVERT.
 PRINCESS ANGELA, only daughter
 of King Louis MISS GERTRUDE ELLIOT.
 THE COUNTESS CARINI, Lady-in-
 Waiting MISS MABEL HACKNEY.
 Lords, Ladies, Ambassadors, A.D.C.'s, Officers, Servants.

PERIOD.—The Present Day.

*The Action takes place in Arcacia, of which Caron is the capital.
 Arcacia and the adjoining country of Kurland are important
 European Powers.*

*First produced at the Court Theatre on the 14th of October, 1899,
 under the Management of Messrs. Arthur Chudleigh and Dion
 Boucicault.*

SCENERY.

ACT I.

SCENE.—CARON, CAPITAL OF ARCACIA. AN ANTE-ROOM IN
THE ROYAL PALACE.

Ten days elapse.

ACT II.

SCENE.—CASSANTRA. A GLADE IN THE PALACE GARDENS.

One day elapses.

ACT III.

SCENE 1.—CARON. THE ARMOURY OF THE ROYAL PALACE.

SCENE 2.—THE THRONE-ROOM OF THE ROYAL PALACE.

Period.—THE PRESENT DAY.

A ROYAL FAMILY

ACT I.

SCENE:—*An ante-room of the Royal Palace at Caron, capital of Arcacia. Louis Quinze decorations. Roof and floor polished oak. Ormolu mirrors, tables, clocks, etc. Folding-doors L. C., door L. Passage screened by curtains R. Ceiling decorated with Royal Arms in raised gilt work. A writing-table L. C., a couch R. C., table R. Some bronze statuary. White china bowls holding blue flowers decorate the room. Books, journals, etc., lying about. The room looks lived in. It is about 11 a.m. on a June morning.*

As the curtain rises, three A. D. C.'s in brilliant cavalry uniforms, orders, aiguillettes, etc., are disposed about the room. One looking out of window R., two reading journals. Bugles sound without and the noise of troops forming in the courtyard is heard. Footmen open doors, and the DUKE OF BERASCON enters L. U. E.

Duke.



OOD-morning, you resplendent warriors!

1st A. D. C. [*At window R. C.*] The Guard is ready to receive the King.

Duke. Eh? Oh! ah! yes, of course—this is Tuesday. Has anyone reminded his Majesty?

2nd A. D. C. He expressly gave orders himself, that he would receive the royal salute once a week, on Tuesdays, so I presume he remembers.

Duke. It doesn't at all follow. Kings' memories can't stand the strain of trifling details. We're paid to supply that sort of deficiency.

[1st A. D. C. *crosses and joins 3rd up L. C. by table.*

2nd A. D. C. Then hadn't you better let him know?

Duke. I! Am I in waiting? I thought my tour of duty began to-morrow.

2nd A. D. C. No, my dear Berascon, to-day.

Duke. Good heavens! Why did no one tell me?

2nd A. D. C. We thought it might seem an impertinence to jog even a vicariously royal memory.

Duke. [*Going to folding-doors.*] It's extremely awkward, but he must be told. I devoutly hope he may be dressed. [*Listens at door—pause.*] I'm afraid he's coming here. That means he's annoyed. Gentlemen!

[*All form up across C.*

Enter L., the KING OF ARCACIA. He is about fifty, with fiercely curling white moustache, white hair à la militaire, pince-nez, florid colour, nervous and quick, and at times irritable, but not a man who conveys self-reliance. All bow.

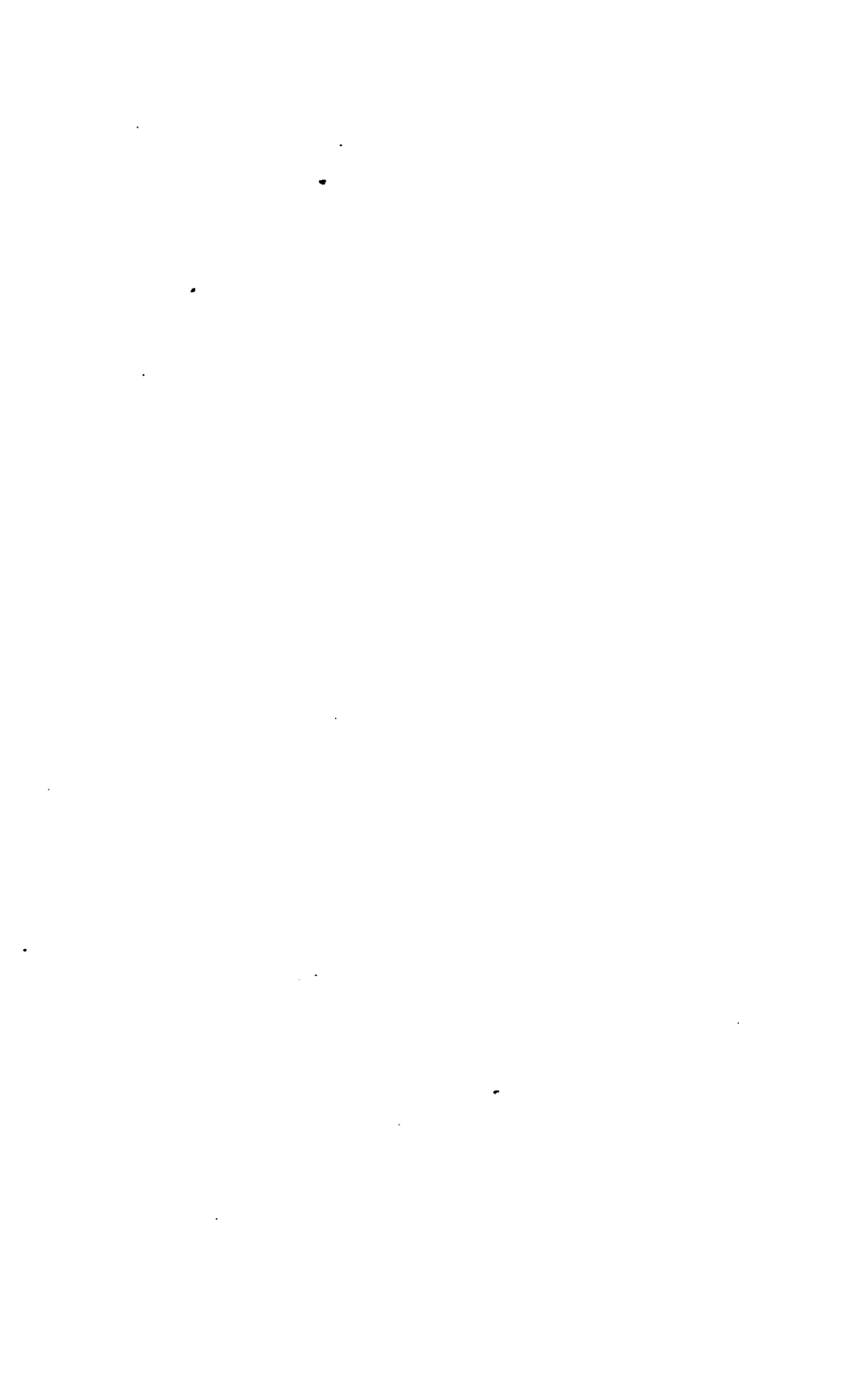
King. [*Genially.*] Ah, there you are, Berascon. I observe a number of troops in the quadrangle apparently doing nothing, and doing it with much enjoyment, gusto and clatter. It is the clatter I object to. Does anybody know why they're disporting themselves?

Duke. It is the Guard, your Majesty, waiting to pay you the royal salute.

King. That's very good of the Guard. But why?

Duke. This is Tuesday, Sir.

King. Eh! What! So it is. [*Irascibly.*] Now I ask you, what is the purpose of four good gentlemen, in receipt of very high pay, being here in waiting, if, when Tuesday comes, I am not informed of it?



Duke. Your Majesty's memory is so marvellous that it seems preposterous to refresh it.

King. Ah! You got that from a book.

Duke. Yes, sir! From your Majesty's handbook for courtiers.

King. [*Pleased.*] What! Hoist with my own petard, eh? Well, well, the Guard must wait a moment. Tell me, what did I wear last Tuesday?

2nd A. D. C. Your frock coat, sir, and a few orders.

King. Yes. That's always sound. Neat, quiet, and one can't put it on the wrong way, like uniform.

[*Exit L.*]

3rd A. D. C. He's in excellent humour to-day.

Duke. Yes. I begged the chef to give him an omelette à la Lucullus for breakfast. His favourite dish, you know.

2nd A. D. C. The reason being——

Duke. I mean to ask him for leave. I'm off to America.

2nd A. D. C. Really? Why?

Duke. To find a duchess.

Omnes. A duchess!

Duke. I don't want to worry you, dear fellows, with my troubles, but I'm hopelessly broke. I lost 5,000 acres of vineyards at roulette last night. I positively must find a duchess.

2nd A. D. C. But you can't go hunting for duchesses when we're on the eve of a war with Kurland.

Duke. You don't seriously think we are, do you?

2nd A. D. C. The papers say so in very large type, and large type sometimes indicates a substratum of truth. The country folk on either side of the frontier are in a state of frantic excitement.

Duke. But we can't afford to go to war. Suppose we do—and lose, as we did ten years ago. This time it would mean an end of the monarchy, and then what's to become of us? [*Rise.*] We're all right as we

are, but you don't suppose we'd amuse a republic, do you?

Enter KING, L., now in frock coat, blue sash, two or three orders, and carrying hat. He is followed by two Secretaries similarly dressed, but with minor orders and no sashes.

King. I am quite ready, gentlemen.

Duke. If your Majesty will permit it, I would point out that the sash is over the wrong shoulder.

King. Eh, what? So it is, I'm extremely obliged. Just help me, will you? [*They adjust sash.*] And have the man who dressed me dismissed. I believe it's the same fellow who last year sent me in a German uniform to receive the President of the French Republic.

Duke. Everything is quite correct now, sir.

King. Good! Then lead the way to the balcony.

Officer of Guard. [*Without.*] Attention! Shoulder arms—Royal salute—Present arms!

[*The DUKE gives sign for the band. The Staff file on to the balcony and take up position through side doors of the window. The KING, hat on, passes through central window. Cheers, words of command, National Anthem, etc., greet his appearance. KING bows and removes hat. As this is going on, enter, L., QUEEN and QUEEN-MOTHER, with bonnets on, accompanied by two Ladies-in-Waiting.*

Queen. Ah! Louis is receiving the Guards' salute.

Queen-M. It's quite an innovation to receive it from the balcony. Formerly the custom was to proceed to a dais——

Queen. Yes, I know, mother, but in these electric days we make the mountain come to Mahomet. Let us look at the troops.

[*QUEEN advances and touches the KING'S*

arm; he turns and makes room for her; she stands at his side. Cheers break out afresh; QUEEN bows and waves handkerchief. QUEEN-MOTHER tries to get on balcony, but fails, a row of backs presenting an impassable barrier. She then sits on couch, showing extreme irritation.

Queen-M. I can conceive of no more humiliating position than that of a Queen-Dowager. For years accustomed to these acclamations, and now—oh! it is hard. [*To Lady-in-Waiting.*] Comtesse—Comtesse, pray are you in waiting on me, or are you not?

Comtesse. Yes, ma'am. I beg a thousand pardons. I was trying to see the soldiers.

Queen-M. And pray why should people invariably stare at soldiers? They are only so many yards of extremely ordinary humanity wrapped by contract in the cheapest of red material.

[*KING and QUEEN return to room from balcony, followed by Staff. Loud cheers as they leave balcony.*]

King. Well, dearest, that's over. I'm very glad you came. I want to discuss a matter of most pressing importance with you. Shall I ask the people in waiting to leave us?

Queen. Yes, Louis, do.

King. Will those in waiting be good enough to leave us for a moment. [*Exeunt all, bowing.*] And when the Prime Minister arrives, let me know. I will see him here, in this room, and I want the Chief of Police sent for.

Queen. Not bad news from the frontier, I trust?

King. If not bad, at least extremely harassing. There is no longer any doubt that the bulk of the people, both of this country and of Kurland, are simply dying to go to war with each other. Indeed, on the frontier line most serious disturbances have already taken place.

Queen-M. Nations are so extremely silly. I remember in '56, when your father and I held the reins, I issued an order——

King. Quite so, my dear mother. But really, there isn't time to wander backwards into reminiscence. And, after all, you were only my father's consort, and had no administrative powers.

Queen-M. Not according to the constitution of the country. But when your father and I disagreed on political points, well, I promise you—he passed a sleepless night. And as he cordially detested insomnia, my political influence was enormous.

Queen. But, Louis, what do the Parliaments say?

King. I'm afraid there is a majority in each Parliament in favour of immediate war. The Emperor of Kurland and I, as you know, are both bitterly opposed to anything of the sort. We realize that defeat would mean revolution in the defeated country, and that the crown would be the first objective of a maddened people. In this we are each supported by our respective Cabinets.

Queen-M. Naturally, as a revolution means that ministers lose the emoluments of office.

King. Now, my Ministers have been in confidential communication with the Kurlandese government, and together they have devised a scheme by which they believe war may be averted. But it involves a sacrifice.

Queen. Not the yielding up of territory on the frontier?

King. No, we can't afford that. No, it is our daughter Angela that must be sacrificed.

Queen-M. Angela! What do you mean?

Queen. My dear Louis!

King. The scheme is to marry her to Prince Victor of Kurland.

Queen-M. Preposterous!

Queen. Louis, I *do* think——

King. Please—please hear me out. You see, romance, and above all, sentiment are strong character-

istics of both nations, and it is felt that such a marriage might quite possibly avert war altogether.

Queen. But Angela's a mere child. Not yet nineteen.

Queen-M. And she's so very highly educated that she's quite sure to object. Besides, they haven't even seen each other.

King. I admit that's a difficulty.

Queen. It's very distressing. Have you spoken to Angela?

King. No. But I mean to this morning.

Queen-M. Then there's all the worry of a prodigious wedding. As we're on the subject, I may as well say that I shall have to demand suitable recognition of my position at any forthcoming Court functions.

King. Surely, mother, every thing in reason——

Queen-M. My dear Louis, at the last procession I insisted—as you know, on at least four horses for my carriage.

King. And four you had.

Queen-M. I had four animals, called by courtesy horses. Half-way two of them went lame. We had to draw up on one side, when I was passed by a number of fifth-rate princesses, not to speak of several doubtful duchesses, and finally, when I did arrive at the Cathedral, I was shown into a back pew marked "For distinguished strangers" forsooth! Now at Angela's wedding——

King. My dear mother, nothing whatever is arranged yet.

Two Footmen open door L., and the DUKE OF BERASCON enters. He bows and stands still.

The Prime Minister?

Duke. Yes, sir, Count Verensa and Baron Holdensen.

King. Be good enough to have them shown in here.

Duke. Yes, sir.

[*Exit L.*

Queen. We'll leave you then, Louis. Don't forget that to-day you and I have to inspect the pictures at

the New Art Gallery. Mother is going to visit the sick in the Government Hospitals.

King. Sometimes I wonder if that sort of thing doesn't make the patients worse.

Queen-M. No, I think they find it stimulating, and the doctors enjoy it immensely. Come, then, Margaret. [*Exit L.*]

Queen. You'll be very gentle with Angela, won't you?

King. Yes, darling, gentle—[*kisses her*] but firm. *Au revoir.*

Queen. Au revoir. [*Exits L., through folding-doors.*]

Enter L., the DUKE OF BERASCON, the doors opened as before by Two Footmen.

Duke. [*Announcing.*] The Count Verensa, and the Baron Holdensen.

Enter VERENSA and HOLDENSEN.

King. Ah, my dear Count, how are you? And you, Baron? Thank you, Duke, you may leave us. [*Exit DUKE L., bowing.*] The Countess Verensa is well, I trust?

Verensa. In excellent health, your Majesty, though a little troubled about the political outlook.

King. Ah, my dear Count, one should never mention public affairs to one's women-folk. Well, now to business.

Verensa. Then, sir, if you will permit me to so express it, I am here to-day as the mouthpiece of your Majesty's Ministers.

King. Quite so.

Verensa. We have been sitting in council for two hours, with the result that we most earnestly petition your Majesty, that negotiations be at once opened with a view to the immediate betrothal of her Royal



Highness, the Princess Angela, to his Royal Highness, the Crown Prince of Kurland.

King. It's a very serious matter, eh, Baron?

Baron. It is indeed. I suppose your Majesty is aware of the existence of a secret society, which will bitterly oppose any such union.

King. No, we didn't know. How very irritating. How unnecessary.

Baron. Indeed, we suspect that all the trouble on the frontier is due to secret agitation of its members.

King. Then of course you had them all arrested?

Baron. No, sir, my police work methodically. It's a habit they can't get out of. There are three stages, suspicion, investigation, and action. At present we are only at the first stage, and have no definite information whatever.

King. That sounds re-assuring, if not precisely useful. Then possibly the society doesn't exist.

Baron. It may not, sir.

King. We confess, Baron, your police appear to us extremely apathetic, not to say comatose.

Baron. True, sir, but they form a sensitive web over the entire country, and all the strands are centred here, in Caron.

King. With you as the chief spider?

Baron. In a sense, sir.

King. Then you must be hungry. We don't remember your catching a fly these three years. In any case, Count, you may assure my Ministers that we will give their proposal our earnest and most grave consideration. Of course, you know, our daughter's views have to be considered.

Verensa. Your Ministers feel sure that her father's daughter will ever be guided by the same high principles that inspire your Majesty.

King. H'm, perhaps. We really don't know. We've never studied heredity, but we believe it has a nasty trick of throwing back. Of course a considerable sum would be voted for dowry, wedding expenses and so

on—merely, of course, as a memento of the nation's affection.

Verensa. Your Ministers, sir, feel that such a course might possibly wound her Royal Highness's feelings.

King. Oh, we think not. She inherits a strong sense of duty, and we think you may rely on her accepting, without flinching, whatever may be—er—er—going. But we'll inquire. Meantime, Baron, you have nothing further to report?

Baron. Nothing, sir.

King. Then, if you don't mind, there's a matter on which we wish to consult Count Verensa alone.

[*Touches bell.*]

Baron. I have your Majesty's permission to withdraw?

King. Certainly. Good-bye. Our remembrances to the Baroness.

Two Footmen *open doors, and* DUKE OF BERASCON *enters.* BARON *exit, the Footmen following.* *As the DUKE is going out.*

King. Ah, and Duke, just ask the Princess Angela to come here, will you? [DUKE *bows and exit, R.*] Now, my dear Count, we are to take it for granted that we absolutely dare not go to war?

Verensa. Undoubtedly, sir. The War Minister assures me that we have only half the requisite number of rifles, and hardly any war material that is not obsolete.

King. Can't we turn the unarmed men into cavalry?

Verensa. Not without horses.

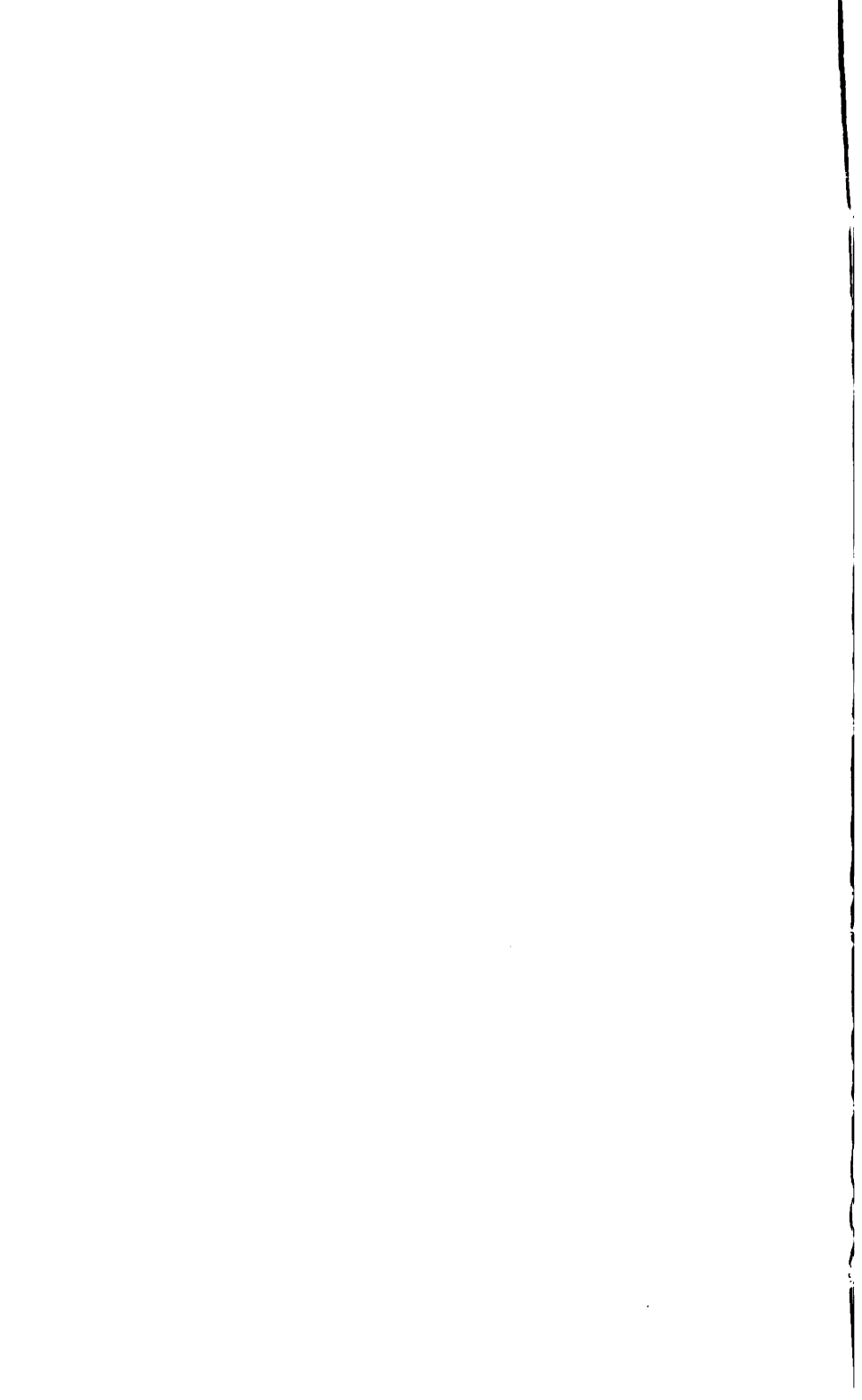
King. Ah, true. And we can't afford horses.

Verensa. Then our purchase of the new electric guns was a heavy charge on the State.

King. And they are not quite satisfactory, are they?

Verensa. Well, no. They've an uncomfortable trick of shattering themselves instead of the target. Another source of weakness is the introduction of the new drill. The men don't know it yet.

King. So we imagined. We saw a regiment march-



ing yesterday, and only a very few were in step. They gave us the impression that when accidentally they *were* in step, they thought it neat, but unnecessary.

Verensa. So you see, sir, the Treasury is really unable to vote a sufficient sum for adequate military expenditure, as well as a suitable dowry for her Royal Highness.

King. I see. You can't do both. Then we won't go to war. It would be infamous while the hand of civilization holds out the olive branch of peace. [*Touches bell.*] You will convey to our Ministers the assurance that our deepest consideration will be given to their advice.

Door opens L. Enter 2nd A. D. C.

Good-bye. Our remembrances to your charming wife.

[*VERENSA bows and exit, L.*]

2nd A. D. C. His Eminence the Cardinal requests audience of your Majesty.

King. Ah! the very man we want, but we're busy. Just ask him to wait. He's fond of flowers, take him to the gardens. [*The A. D. C. bows and exit, L.*]

The Curtains R. part and PRINCESS ANGELA looks in.

She is a beautiful girl of nineteen, and carries garden scissors and a huge bunch of sweet peas.

Angela. You want me, father?

King. My darling, yes. What delicious flowers.

Angela. There! [*Buries his face in them.*]

King. Now, now, Angela, we've got to be very, very serious.

Angela. Unfortunately, father, I haven't time this morning. It's Father Anselm's hour for teaching me moral philosophy. He'll be here in a moment and it's the last lesson he's to give me. [*Going to him.*] Besides, how can you be serious with that funny old moustache of yours climbing all sorts of ways it was never meant to go. [*Twisting it.*]

King. Angela, my moustache has been considered very striking—very distinguished.

Angela. Ah! but not by a Raphael, a Rubens, a Botticelli!

King. No, I believe not. Even art is progressive. D'you know, child, sometimes I see in you a striking likeness to myself—you have a strange, almost a wild beauty.

Angela. I knew that ages ago.

[She puts flower in his coat.]

King. Ah! Don't be so proud of the ages that are gone, dearest. The day will come when you'll find the past tense a very sad one. But there, you are grown up now and fit to fulfil your destiny, the destiny of a queen.

Angela. A queen! But I'd much rather not, I assure you. I don't in the least want to be a queen. For, oh, father! I've been reading Romeo and Juliet, as you told me to, and it's too heavenly for words. That's all I want to be—a Juliet—with stars and gardens, moonlight and love, balconies and tombs. Shakespeare had such a beautiful mind. Was he really an Englishman?

King. I understand he was a number of Englishmen. A sort of composite creature. And now, my angel, I've something to break to you.

Angela. Oh, I know. A function to go to "en grande tenue," a building to be opened, or a statue to be unveiled. Well, what is it?

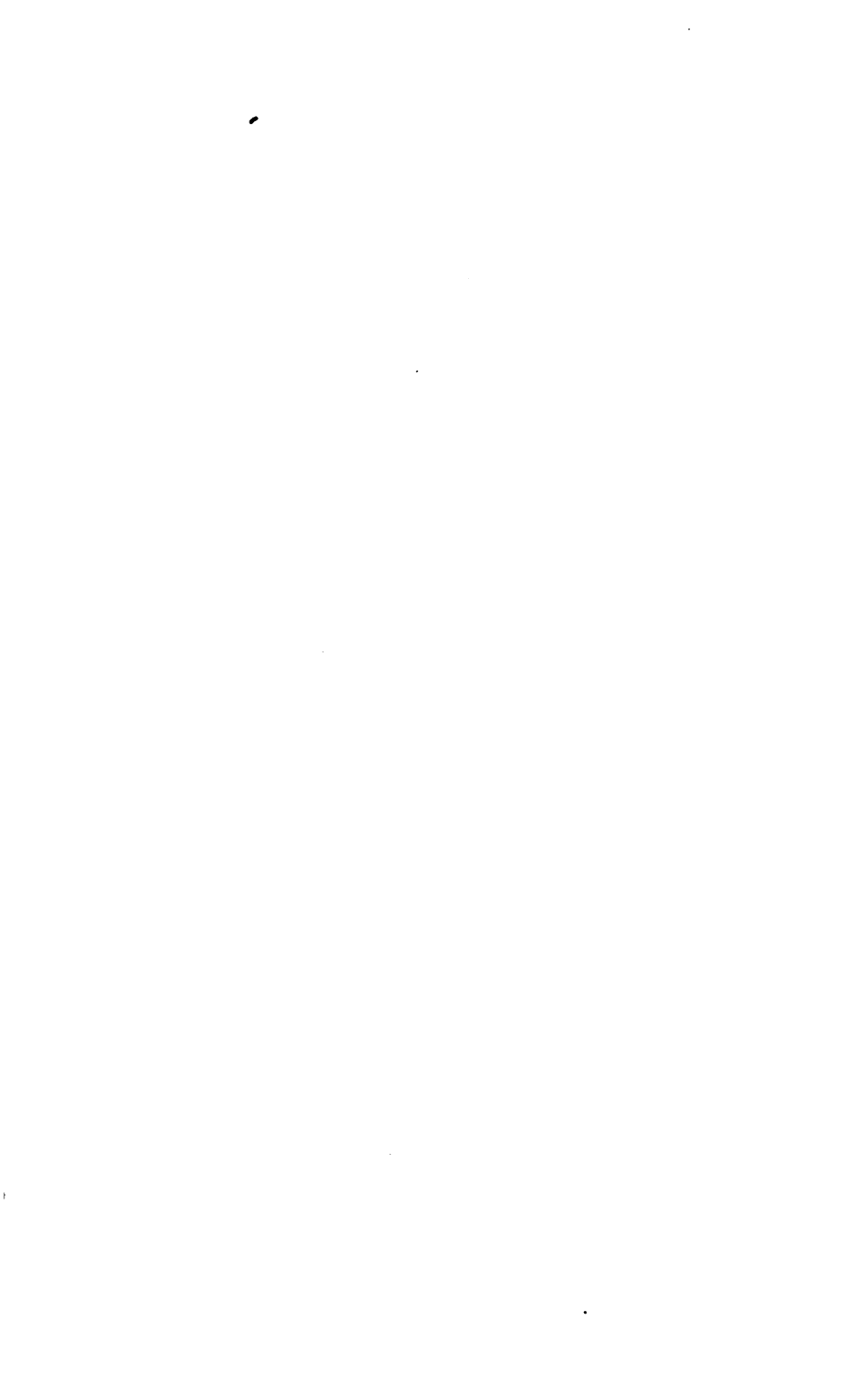
King. I want you, my pet, to be prepared to marry.

Angela. Why, dearest of fathers, of course I'm prepared to marry, but only when my own beloved Romeo asks me.

King. I don't think you quite understand. Royalty doesn't marry for love, you know.

Angela. Doesn't it?

King. Oh, dear no! A royal marriage is a sort of diplomatic treaty arranged by the Foreign Office. In fact, it's almost desirable that royal couples who marry shouldn't be in love. Then they stand in awe of each other, which is always a good thing.



Angela. What are you talking about, father?

King. Darling, only one thing will avert war between this country and Kurland, and that is your marriage with Prince Victor.

Angela. Father!

King. It is true, my pet.

Angela. Father—ah yes—it's all a joke. I know—I see it is!

King. No, Angela, it's an exceedingly solemn problem.

Angela. But—[*slightly annoyed*] but I've never seen him.

King. Then you can't possibly feel any aversion to the idea. And you come of a great and royal race, that has ever given itself to the service of the nation.

Angela. Well, I simply won't—there!

King. [*Touches her arm.*] Was it my daughter that spoke?

Angela. Perhaps not. But at least an educated woman of the nineteenth century.

King. That is not the person to whom I am appealing. I hope I am addressing an embryo queen. It is my duty to see you suitably provided for before your brother Charles succeeds to the throne.

Angela. But, father dear, you're not going to die so very suddenly?

King. One never knows. I felt an ominous palpitation last night after dinner. I don't think you realize what war means. You've never seen a battlefield, have you?

Angela. No.

King. I have—once. The battle was over. I have never forgotten it. I will never see another.

Angela. That's all very well, but how often have you told me that great empires are made by war. Look at the great Napoleon.

King. That's quite different. Napoleon was a spoilt child with a box of soldiers. He went on playing with them till they all got broken. Then Nurse Wellington

came, took the box away, and made Napoleon stand in the corner. Besides, Angela, don't you see that Kurland is the very last country we can afford to go to war with. Geographically we ought to be allies.

Angela. I decline to be married for purposes of geography. Am I not a woman of flesh and blood, like any other? Haven't you brought me up in a world charged with romance and luxury and beautiful dreams?

King. To be about to marry a man you've never seen is surely a beautiful dream.

Angela. I don't care, I will not do it!

Enter QUEEN and QUEEN-MOTHER lower door L.

Queen. Well, my poor child, has your father spoken to you?

Angela. Yes, oh yes! It's a terrible idea. It's stunned me!

Queen. I know—I know. But, darling, we unfortunate creatures, born to a high estate, have to do these things. I'm sure Louis and I never dreamt we should be happy till several years after our marriage, did we, Louis?

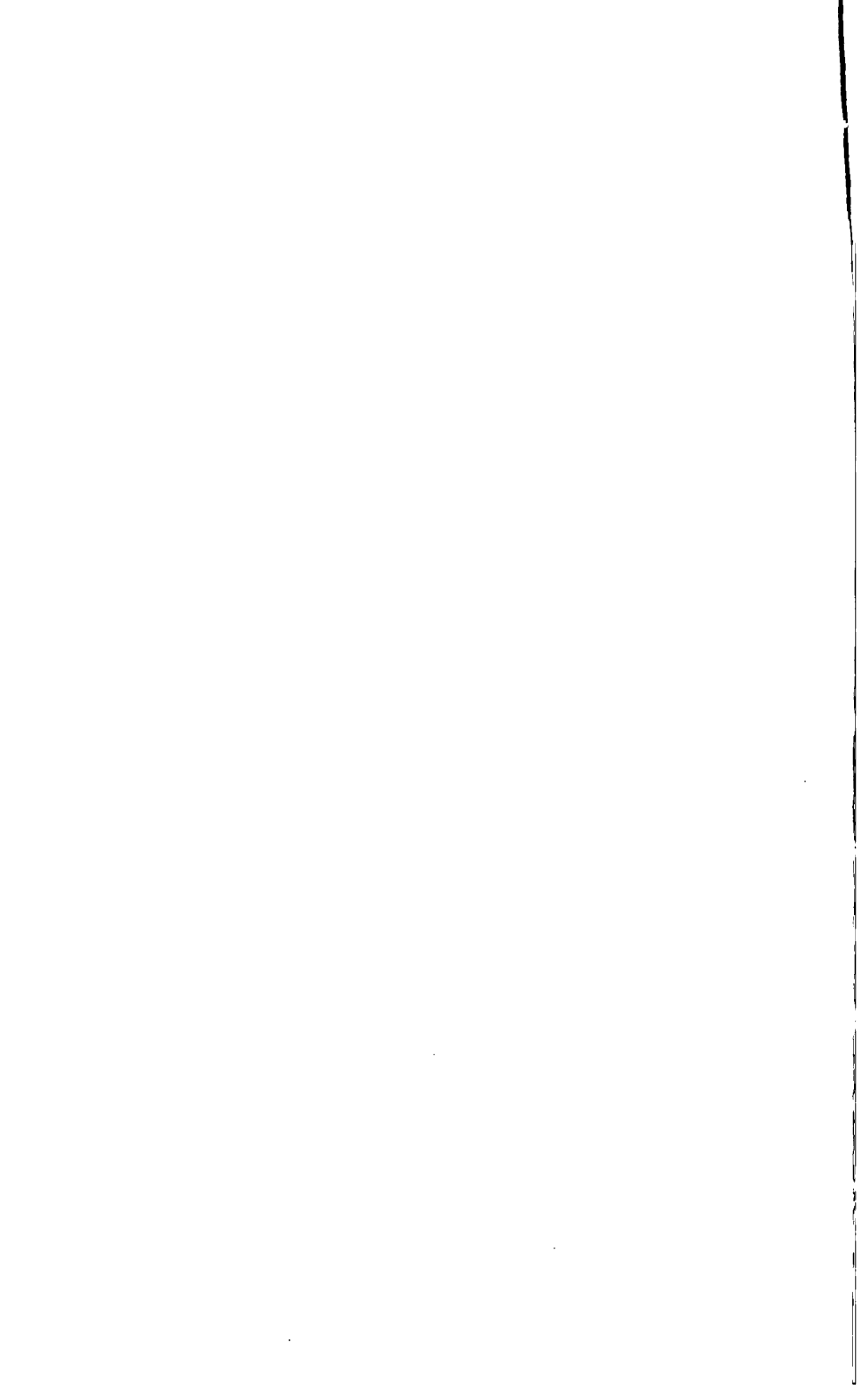
King. I thought it just possible.

Queen. But after long years a wonderful resignation came to us.

Queen-M. My grand-daughter, I feel sure, will do all that her country asks of her. Of course I quite see the uncomfortable side of it; ridiculous wedding processions, quantities of such inartistic bunting that even the horses shy at it, dreadful cannons going off unexpectedly, people shouting at one from the crowd——

King. Mother, I do wish you'd put things more cheerfully. Besides, the people adore Angela.

Queen-M. All princesses are adored theoretically. As a girl I was always considered a sort of safety-



valve for outbursts of national affection. I remember once——

King. Yes, yes; but we've got to think of the future—not of the past.

Queen. By the way, what are Prince Victor's views on the subject?

King. As for that, I believe he's quite as much opposed to the idea as Angela.

Angela. Oh, is he? I'm so glad. I hope he sticks to that.

King. His father, however, assures me that his affections will be directed by political pressure if necessary.

Angela. Oh, it's maddening! I will not be loved by Act of a Foreign Parliament. I will not marry a creature who doesn't want to marry me. I will not be a martyr to political geography. I will not be linked for life to a man whom I've only seen in the illustrated papers, one week with short legs, another with long. I will not marry an unknown quantity—I will not——

King. Stop! It is not fitting that your grandmother, your mother or I should listen to such an uncontrolled outburst of revolutionary sentiment. I am bitterly disappointed in you, Angela. We will leave you, and I trust, when next we meet, you will be in a frame of mind more fitted to the high station to which you have been called. I will send the Cardinal to you. Come, Margaret. [Exit, L.]

Queen. [In tears.] My poor, poor Angela, don't be downhearted. He may be a very charming youth. I only met him once. He was at the lanky age, you know, very long legs and unbrushable hair. And do try to humour your father. [Exit, L.]

Queen-M. Your manners leave much to be desired. If I, at your age, had spoken as you have to-day, I believe I should have been secretly poisoned.

[Exit, L. As she is going out, a big Newfoundland dog, "Socrates," bounds into

the room and rushes to ANGELA, who is seated on the floor crying bitterly.

Angela. My dear, dear old Socrates, you're the only friend I have. You don't want me to marry an unknown quantity, do you? Tell me, wise dog, what am I to do? Didn't you always suppose that a princess only existed to be beautiful and happy, and to have lots of bones?

Enter FATHER ANSELM, L.

Anselm. Is your Royal Highness ready for our last lesson?

Angela. The last lesson! How sad it sounds. Yes, I'm ready, so come along, Socrates, you're quite wise enough as it is. [*Leads dog out between curtains.*] Father Anselm! [*He turns. Very quickly.*] Tell me, would you marry anyone you didn't love, even though he loves me, which nobody knows he does, and which I suspect he doesn't?

Anselm. That's a difficult question, ma'am.

Angela. They're trying to force me to marry Prince Victor of Kurland for the welfare of the country.

Anselm. I see. To bring about a *rapprochement* between the two nations.

Angela. Yes. But the mean way they put it is to avert war. That is how they pin me down. They know I'm warm-hearted and they're taking advantage of it.

Anselm. If your Royal Highness consented to such a marriage to save the shedding of blood, it would be a very noble, an infinitely touching sacrifice.

Angela. Yes, but we *must* remember that I am human. It's all very well for *you* to talk like that. You can't be forced to marry anyone.

Anselm. No. But even I have to make sacrifices.

Angela. Have you?

Anselm. Yes, princess. I have longed, indeed still long, for the joys of the world; joys that I must never



know. So tempted am I at times, that I tremble for myself, and see before me, as a penance, the shades of the cloister.

Angela. You mean, a sacrifice of yourself, for the good of the church?

Anselm. And for my own good. To have the great joy of knowing that one has put self second in the work of the world.

Card. I fully appreciate the difficulty, sir.

Angela. That's the Cardinal! He's coming to try to induce me to marry a man I've never seen. And I'm not going to—so *au revoir*, my tutor that was—my friend that is to be. [Exit, R.]

Enter CARDINAL *with* KING, L., *arm in arm.*

King. Alone, Father Anselm?

Anselm. Yes, your Majesty.

King. Where is the Princess?

Anselm. She seemed to be in much distress, sir. She has just left the room.

King. Then be good enough to ask her to return.

Anselm. Yes, sir. [Exit, R.]

King. You see, my dear Cardinal, your views are likely to have great weight with her. She has always entertained towards you a very warm affection, and really, if you can't induce her to do what is clearly her duty, I don't know what is to happen. In a few days every newspaper in Arcacia will be advocating this marriage, and if I refuse to assent to it, imagine how I shall be criticised. We—Arcacia—criticised!

Card. Criticism would hardly attempt such a hopeless task. It could only resolve itself into extravagant praise of your Majesty.

King. Thank you; yes. I think you're right. By the way, you were entrusted with the direction of Prince Victor's studies some twelve years ago. What sort of a lad is he?

Card. Very charming and manly, I assure your

Majesty—and, if I may say so, admirably educated. Now, a few days ago, a little scheme occurred to me, which, I believe, might bring about the end you desire. But I fear I should have to ask for an absolutely free hand.

King. Willingly, my dear Cardinal, willingly!

Card. I should first venture to ask that the Court be moved, almost at once, to your Majesty's summer palace at Cassantra.

King. H'm—ah—well—yes—that could be arranged. And the reason?

Card. I require a romantic background for my little scheme. Next, I would beg of you, sir, to invite me there, together with an old pupil, who, at this moment is a guest of my own. He came with me this morning to write his name in your Majesty's book, and I believe he is waiting for me in the picture gallery.

King. A pupil, you say?

Card. Yes, a young Kurlandese Count, named Bernadine, attached to the staff of the Crown Prince of Kurland.

King. I see. The only difficulty is that my ministers suggest that Prince Victor should be invited here at once, and a state ball given on the day of his arrival, probably about a fortnight from to-day.

Card. That will not interfere with the scheme in any way.

King. You can't give me even a vague outline of what you mean to do?

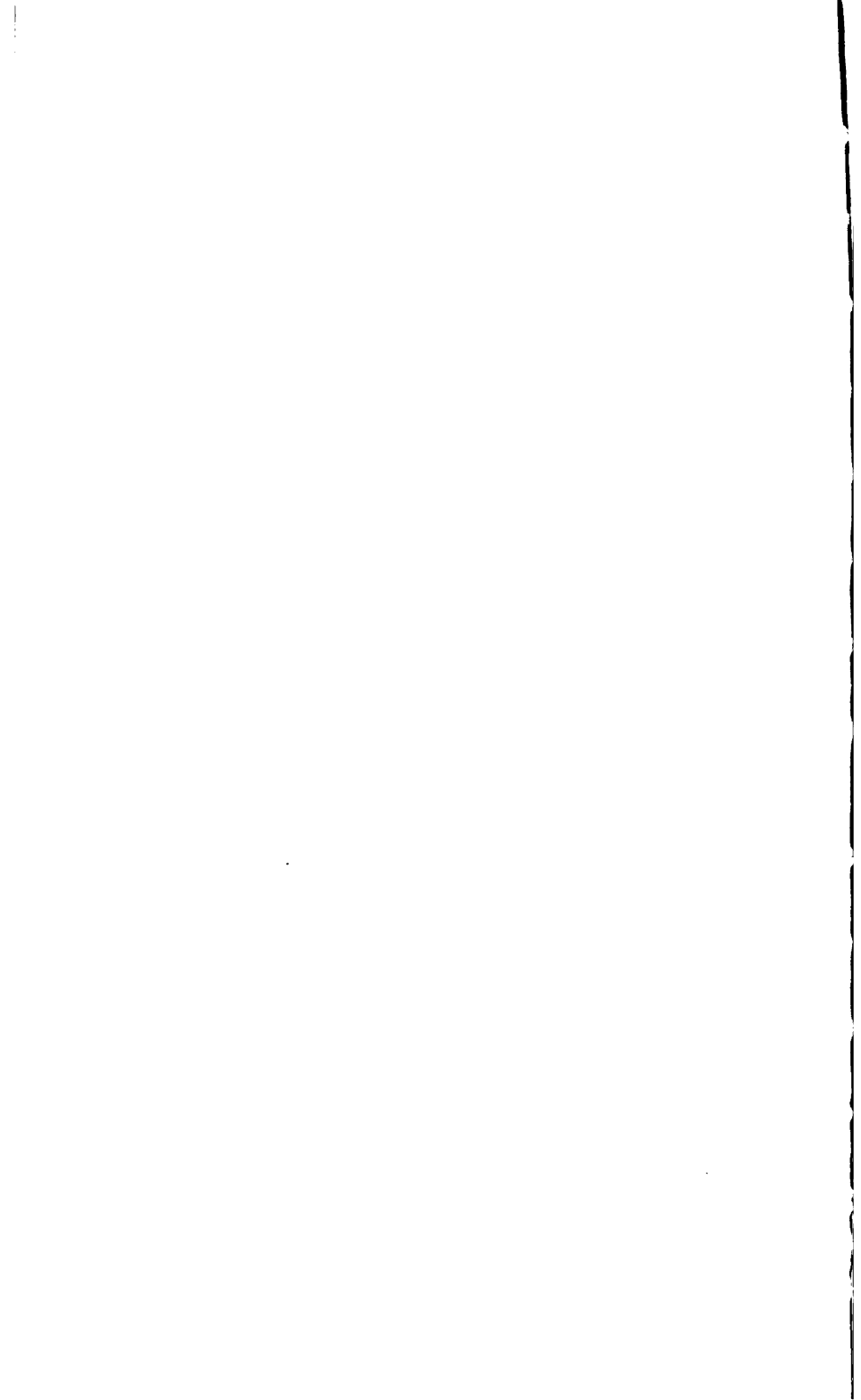
Card. I fear not, your Majesty, beyond this—that on the night of the proposed ball, I believe you will be able to flash all over the world, the news of the betrothal of your daughter to Prince Victor.

King. My poor child!

Card. Let us hope, sir, the betrothal will be that of two devoted lovers.

King. Lovers! I'm afraid you don't know Angela, or else you possess some charm—some philtre.

Card. No; but deep in the hearts of the young,



there is a well full of the philtre of love, and I hope to stir the depths.

King. Your Eminence is an optimist.

Card. That is the duty of a priest, sir.

Enter ANSELM, R.

Anselm. Her Royal Highness will be here in a moment.

King. Ah, thank you. Then, Cardinal, I'll leave her with you. I don't want to hamper you, and she might be inclined to restrict her views if I were here. Be gentle with her, but—like myself—firm. [*Exit, L.*]

Card. Diplomacy is in the air, my dear Anselm, and I require an accomplice. You will be surprised to hear that for the last two months Prince Victor has been travelling incognito, shooting in Austria and Northern Kurland. Quite recently he wrote to me, his old tutor, begging that I would let him pay me a visit, in absolute secrecy, that he might at least see our little princess to whom the world is so anxious to marry him. He has grown a moustache which entirely alters his appearance—and he is here.

Anselm. The Crown Prince of Kurland is here?

Card. Hush! Yes, but for the present he is known as my guest and friend, Count Bernadine. It is possible that the Princess, who loathes the mere sound of his name, may learn to love him, if she meets him as an ordinary mortal.

Anselm. Then you mean——

Card. I mean that love is a wild little boy. He'll break feloniously into a house, but open the door and beckon him, and you find he'll fly away. You understand?

Anselm. Quite, your Eminence.

Card. Then keep your counsel and assist me in all that you can.

Enter PRINCESS ANGELA, R.

Angela. Good morning, father.

[Kneels and kisses his ring.]

Card. Benedicite, my daughter.

Angela. Isn't it a lovely morning? So fresh and sunny! It ought to be delightful!

Card. And is it not? You may go, Anselm.

Angela. Oh, mayn't he stay?

Card. Unfortunately he has pressing work to do.

Angela. And I suppose we must all do our duty when there's no way out of it. Good-bye, then.

Anselm. Good-bye, Princess. *[Exit L.]*

Angela. It is a lovely morning, isn't it?

Card. Yes, a remarkably fine morning. So fine that we shall quite enjoy a quiet little talk together.

Angela. One of the gardeners said we might have rain later.

Card. Did he? Well, he ought to know. But you and I——

Angela. And rain is so bad for the sweet peas.

Card. Yes, but——

Angela. But it's good for the tomatoes. Yes, I suppose it is!

Card. Come, Princess, indeed we must look things in the face. Your father has told you——

Angela. Oh, yes, yes! And don't you see, dear Cardinal, how cruel it is? I'm only a girl, after all, a weak, helpless girl. Be my friend. You will, won't you? Don't you see how alone I am?

Card. Yes, yes, my child, and I mean to be your humble servant and friend. Come, tell me what you feel.

Angela. They want to drive me headlong to a marriage that makes me shudder, that sickens me! And all my life I've been taught that true marriage lies in a great love—a love that strengthens life and



makes it beautiful—a love that is holy and binding only when the bonds are willingly woven by ourselves. It's all very girlish, I dare say, to think so, but I—I can't help it.

Card. There is a greater beauty in life, Princess, than what you speak of, and it is called self-sacrifice.

Angela. Yes, it's a beautiful thing to read about. But surely it is not asked of the young? To leave the sunshine and walk in the shade before the sun is at its height. No, no, I passionately want to play in the sun, if only for a time. And yet—long before mid-day—you would drag me to a hateful cloister, and leave me there—not even alone.

Card. In the cloister you might find a happiness that far exceeds that of the sunshine.

Angela. Ah! but not the happiness I long for. And youth has a right to long, hasn't it? I want the roses and the sun, the joy of living and laughing. Surely you've forgotten the wonderful dreams of your own youth or you'd never wish to waken others so roughly.

Card. Many fair visions fade away when the young priest draws the hood over his eyes.

Angela. But only because he chooses a world of more beautiful dreams—dreams that are beyond most of us. And I plead for my own little homely dream. Ah! I see a beautiful light in your eyes.

Card. Do you, Princess? Then you see a reflection of your own splendid youth, and the faint memory of my own.

Angela. And so—for auld lang syne——

Card. For auld lang syne—you shall marry only the man who wins your love. There! [*Putting his hands on her shoulders.*] And in the meantime I've arranged a little holiday for you. The Court is going to Cassantra.

Angela. Not really? Going to Cassantra?

Card. Yes, to the cool green fields, and shining skies. You can wear country frocks, and climb, and

fish, and row, and scramble all day long—[*takes both her hands.*] and do just as you please.

Angela. Father! Father! I thought we had to stop in this horrid city. Is it really going to happen?

Card. Yes, on one condition—that you promise to be guided in the matter of your marriage, by me. Fail in *your* promise, and, like a topsy-turvy Cinderella, your country frocks will change to ermine, and you'll find yourself back in the palace again.

Angela. And no one will speak of love or marriage?

Card. Not unless you accidentally start the subject.

Angela. Oh, how splendid! I promise everything you ask.

Four Footmen, followed by the KING, QUEEN, and QUEEN-MOTHER, enter. They are preceded by A.D.C.'s, Ladies-in-Waiting, etc.

King. Well, my Angela! Ah! do I see in your face the sunshine that so often follows the shower?

Angela. Well—I——

Card. The Princess has been most considerate; she has fallen in with the first of my suggestions.

King. Capital—that's excellent! And now for the duties of the day. [*Wearily.*] Duke, just run through the list of our engagements for to-day, will you?

Duke. Twelve o'clock, sir, the Picture Galleries.

King. Ah! Do we make a speech there?

Duke. No, sir.

King. Good!

Duke. One o'clock, sir, laying the foundation stone of the New Lunatic Asylum.

King. Ah! Speech?

Duke. Yes, sir.

King. To the lunatics?

Duke. To the public in general.

King. Ah! A distinction, if not precisely a difference. Be sure you give me the right speech.

Duke. You may rely on that, sir.

King. I'm not so sure. Last year, if you remember, when I had to address a meeting of the Anti-gambling League, one of you gentlemen handed me, and I began to read, a paper advocating a starting gate at Race Meetings. However, what next?

Duke. Two o'clock, sir, luncheon.

King. Where?

Duke. Here, sir.

King. Oh! It's not a banquet. Just let me see the menu. [*An A.D.C. hands it to him. Looking at it.*] Very indigestible, but I suppose our chef would resign if we asked for a simple chop. Go on, please.

Duke. Three-thirty, sir, inspection of the New Drainage Works.

King. Speech?

Duke. No, sir, merely a few remarks to the Chief Engineer.

King. Where are the remarks?

[*A Secretary comes forward with the speeches.*]

Sec. The speeches are written, sir, but we thought you'd prefer the remarks to be extempore.

King. That seems a little unkind towards the Chief Engineer. However, what next?

Duke. You receive the Kurlandese Ambassador, sir, at five o'clock, in connection with the risings on the frontier.

King. And then?

Duke. That is all, sir.

King. Good. Then at six o'clock we shall require four of you on the croquet lawn. I know you all dislike the game, but unfortunately I'm very fond of it. And now, I imagine, we had better start for the Picture Galleries.

Queen-M. And the hospitals.

Queen. You may come with us, Angela. Would it amuse you?

Queen-M. Or, if you choose, you may accompany me.

King. I thought you were going to take Charles with you?

Queen-M. So it was arranged. I've no idea why he isn't here?

King. Where is our son?

Duke. I understand the nurse is bringing his Royal Highness. Ah! here he is.

Enter Nurse with PRINCE CHARLES, aged seven.

King. Well, my little son, going out for a drive with grandmother?

Charles. I don' wan' to go!

Queen. Come, come, Charles, little princes mustn't cry. Remember one day you'll be a King.

Charles. I don' wan' to be a King.

King. It's quite extraordinary, my entire family seems to shirk the responsibilities of its station. Come now, be a little man! All these ladies and gentlemen are looking at you.

Charles. I don' wan' 'em to look at me.

Queen-M. Leave him to me, Louis. Come along. If you don't behave, you shan't see the hospitals.

Angela. [*Taking him in her arms and kissing him.*] Charles, darling, we must all try to do our duty.

Charles. [*Responding.*] All right, I'll try. Come along, grandmother. And if I'm a good little boy at the hospitals, will Grandmother give me a Noah's Ark, or a box of soldiers?

[*The QUEEN-MOTHER leads out CHARLES; they are followed by an A. D. C. and Lady-in-Waiting.*]

King. Are you ready, Margaret?

Queen. Quite, Louis.

King. [*Turning to DUKE.*] And, Duke, be sure you point out the pictures we ought to admire, especially if you see the artist standing near. It's an unfortunate but popular fallacy that royalty is always supposed to say the right thing at the right moment.

Duke. I shall be at your side, sir, with a suitable supply of impromptu comments.

King. Quite so. Now then, Margaret, if you're quite ready.

[*Exeunt all, except CARDINAL and ANGELA.*]

Card. They tell me, my daughter, you have never seen Prince Victor?

Angela. Never. That's why the whole thing is so preposterous. Love may be blind, but one can't be blinded by a man one's never seen.

Card. Princess, I beg of you to ask yourself which is more likely to bring you happiness—a sacrifice to duty, or the indulgence of self? [Exit, C.]

Angela. Anyhow, I can't marry him, and I won't. I'd rather marry, haphazard, the first man who came into this room.

Enter CROWN PRINCE, L.

Prince. I'm so sorry. I'm afraid I've made a mistake. I thought this led to a corridor.

Angela. It doesn't matter, the King's gone.

Prince. Then I take it, I'm addressing one of the ladies of the Court.

Angela. Yes, I'm that at least.

Prince. And has the Princess Angela gone with his Majesty?

Angela. No; why?

Prince. I'm curious to see her. They tell me there's a possibility of her marrying our Crown Prince.

Angela. Oh! then you are from Kurland?

Prince. Yes.

Angela. Through the curtains, the first turning to the right will take you to the Palace door.

Enter CARDINAL, diligently reading a pastoral. He catches sight of the PRINCE and PRINCESS; noiselessly turns and exit on tiptoe. During the above the PRINCE speaks.

Prince. I fear my intrusion seems unwarrantable, and I beg you to accept my humblest apologies.

[They both turn and stand surprised, watching the retreating CARDINAL.]

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE:—*Cassantra. The Palace garden in summer.*

L. C. a large tree, the foliage of which completely covers the flies. R. and L. are archways of roses. Beyond is a view of vineyards and purple mountains. Masses of flowers and creepers everywhere.

TIME: *About 5 p.m.*

As the curtain rises, the KING is reclining on bank, R. C., reading newspaper. The QUEEN and QUEEN-MOTHER are doing needlework.

Queen-M.



CONFESS, Louis, this visit to Cassantra at the height of the season in town, though very delightful, bewilders me. I presume you have reasons for such a Quixotic holiday.

King. Certainly, my dear mother. Angela was fretting herself to death in Caron over her impending betrothal, and the Cardinal suggested a change. So here we've been for a fortnight, and I confess to enjoying the glorious scenery, profound quiet, and heavenly climate. Then Angela has been more tractable—more resigned.

Queen-M. I was not aware that a heavenly climate could present a future husband in a more agreeable light.

King. Oh, I think so. She seems more open to reason. I've explained to her that marriages, especially Royal marriages, are made in heaven, and that

we ought not to tamper with the obvious convenience of such a creed.

Queen. Louis, I'm a little alarmed at the friendship that has sprung up between Angela and Count Bernadine during the last few days.

Queen-M. Exactly! At a time when you mean to force her to marry Prince Victor, you throw her into daily contact with an extremely good-looking young man.

King. Pooh! Nonsense! Angela is much too shrewd to seriously encourage young Bernadine. She may possibly be exercising the 'prentice hand.

Queen-M. I'm not so sure. If a girl's in love, she is sometimes cunning, but never shrewd. When do we start for Caron?

King. To-morrow at ten. That will allow you several hours' rest before the ball.

Queen. By the way, Louis, I've constantly seen the Chief of Police about the grounds to-day. Why is he here?

King. I've no idea! He begged leave to be near me, and I allowed it, but he is extremely reticent as to his reasons.

Queen. Not some horrible Socialist plot, I hope?

King. Possibly. These are the little inconveniences we have to put up with. I think the nation, as a whole, is fond of me, though a few eccentric people seem quite gratuitously to desire my demise. It's very extraordinary, for it's not as if they knew me personally. I don't think there's anything to be feared, but one has to humour high officials.

Queen-M. So your poor dear father always said, but he invariably left the humouring to me. I used a fixed smile for years with enormous success, and even now, when I meet a Cabinet Minister, my facial muscles begin to expand automatically. [*Rising and looking about.*] I wonder where Angela is?

King. Fishing, I believe.

Queen-M. With the Count?

King. I fancy he's there.

Queen-M. I thought so. I've done my best to keep them apart, but it's quite impossible. Yesterday I dogged their steps over most difficult ground for hours, to prevent any possible exchange of erotic sentiments, but more than once they disappeared incontinently. The Count's agility over rocks and streams was amazing—and as for Angela—well, she might have been equipped with the paraphernalia of the Vanishing Lady. I'm extremely stiff to-day.

Queen. [*To QUEEN-MOTHER.*] You don't feel ill, do you?

Queen-M. Not exactly. I sent for the doctor this morning, and he was unsympathetic enough to think that the exercise had done me good.

King. Believe me, mother, your exertions were quite unnecessary.

Queen-M. I think, Louis, you sometimes forget the fierce light that beats upon a throne.

King. Oh no! But as often as possible I switch it off.

Queen. Ah! here is the Cardinal.

Enter CARDINAL at back. He is reading a manual, and at first is apparently unaware of the others' presence.

King. Ah! my dear lord Cardinal!

Card. [*Gives a deep bow.*] My humble duty, sir. I trust I am not intruding?

King. Your Eminence's intrusions are always delightful.

Queen-M. And, as it happens, I was particularly anxious to see you.

Card. I am indeed gratified, ma'am.

Queen-M. Certain matters appear to be going on under my very nose, and yet I am denied the odour of their significance. It seems you entertain no doubt

as to my grand-daughter's acceptance of Prince Victor.

Card. That is true, ma'am.

Queen-M. Yet you must be aware that she is constantly in the society of your *protégé*, Count Bernadine, an uncomfortably attractive youth.

Card. Yes, I know it.

Queen-M. And propinquity is apt to end in love.

Card. Believe me, ma'am, even if her Royal Highness should learn to love my young friend, she will marry Prince Victor.

King. Really, mother, I think you must leave matters in his Eminence's hands. Personally, I have every confidence in the issue.

Card. You are very good, sir.

Queen-M. So be it. I wash my hands of the whole affair. But I do protest, that to afford a girl of Angela's rank, every opportunity of loving this young person, is politically indecent. It would be no worse were your Eminence to fall in love with the daughter of a Protestant street-preacher, and that, I hope, is impossible.

Card. It is improbable, ma'am, but one never knows.

King. [*Reading.*] According to the "Arcasian Times" the temper of the nation is distinctly bellicose. I see that at the theatres last night patriotic songs were hailed with the wildest enthusiasm.

Card. Yes, sir, but whether by accident or design, these wild enthusiasts never inconvenience themselves by fighting.

Enter, C., the DUKE OF BERASCON.

King. Well, my dear Berascon, what is it?

Duke. Telegrams have come, sir, as to further riots on the frontier.

Queen. Oh!

King. Good heavens! Further riots!



Duke. Yes, sir. [*Assists the KING to rise.*] The telegrams are in your Majesty's study.

King. I'll come at once. [*To QUEEN.*] Meantime, Margaret, send for Angela. Tell her of this appalling state of affairs. She will surely see clearly where her duty lies.

Queen. Yes, I'll come with you. How terrible!

King. Then, Berascon, let us go. Further riots? Dear, dear. And yet we sent three delegates to the Peace Conference.

[*Exeunt C., KING, QUEEN and DUKE, L., the CARDINAL looking after them.*]

Queen-M. I cannot fathom you, Cardinal. Your admirably affected simplicity of soul seems to me to imply a complete knowledge of everything you oughtn't to know.

Card. I am relieved to hear it, ma'am.

Queen-M. Why, pray?

Card. Because to be gauged by one of your Majesty's lofty standard and high purpose would reveal so many shortcomings.

Queen-M. Possibly. However, I imagine that your success in this life will continue. [*Going up C., she turns to him.*] As to a future state, one cannot prophesy with quite as much conviction. But the air of mystery that surrounds you, together with—if you will pardon my saying so—a certain unswerving assurance, will no doubt end in your reigning at the Vatican. [*Exit, L.*]

Card. [*Bowing low.*] *Au revoir*, ma'am. A good woman, but she feels her age. I think, had it been mine to suggest an alteration in the scheme of life, I'd have had all folks born old—old and horribly experienced—so that, as the years rolled on, they grew younger and younger, simpler and simpler, till at the end they passed to their last quiet sleep with the white souls of childhood. I was not, however, consulted.

Enter, L., BARON HOLDENSEN.

Ah, my dear Baron! Ever plotting?

Baron. Yes, Eminence. Spreading the net for these notorious patriots.

Card. Good! Be careful, lest you trip yourself in its meshes.

Baron. And as we are on the subject, I may tell you that there is a spy of the patriots in the household here.

Card. Dear, dear! A spy! And whom do you suspect?

Baron. Your Eminence's *protégé*, Count Bernadine.

Card. Tut! tut! tut! Bernadine! And pray on what grounds?

Baron. For many reasons. One being that I have turned up the Kurlandese Almanack, and I find there's no such title as Bernadine.

Card. [*To himself.*] No, a patent of nobility I created myself. [*Aloud.*] This is very serious.

Baron. And further, I find he's a mystery to the entire household. He can give no account of himself. I am waiting now for an opportunity of questioning him closely.

Card. Your chance has come then, for here he is.

[*Is about to rise.*

Baron. Will your Eminence remain within hearing?

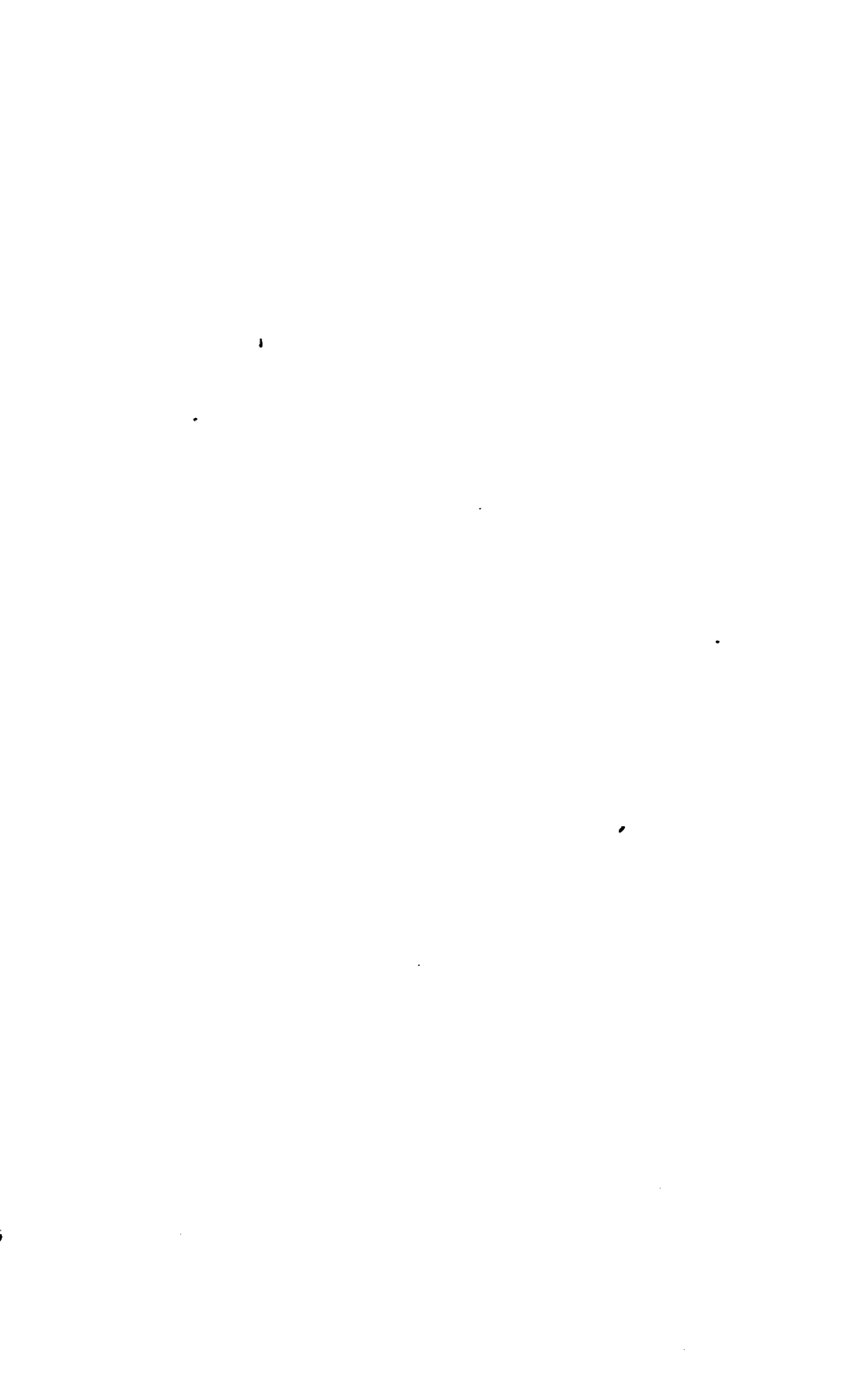
Card. By all means. [*Sits again.*] Baron, this is a very great shock to me, the more so when I reflect on your unfailing perspicacity.

Baron. I think your Eminence will find that my suspicions are not without foundation.

Enter PRINCE, R.

How do you do, Count?

Prince. Thanks, I'm all right. [*Comes down, R. C.*] Ah, your Eminence, feeling the heat?



Card. No, Bernadine, a little drowsy, that's all.

Baron. Count Grenadine, I think?

Prince. Eh? Yes—no, no; Bernadine, not Grenadine.

Baron. A thousand pardons, it's so easy to forget a name.

Prince. But I hadn't forgotten.

Baron. True, your memory is remarkable. I understand you've recently come from Kurland.

Prince. More or less. [Sits, R.]

Baron. They tell me the country is somewhat unsettled.

Prince. Oh! Shockingly.

Baron. We are much the same here. Stirred, I hear, by Kurlandese Socialists in disguise.

Prince. I should think that's quite likely.

Baron. Possibly you have heard of them. Perhaps even from them?

Prince. Between ourselves, I've heard whispers of a plot to abduct the Prince on his journey, if this marriage is persisted in.

Baron. Have you indeed? So have I! Now tell me, do you imagine the proposed Royal betrothal will smoothe affairs in Kurland?

Prince. I hope so. [Rises, goes down R.]

Baron. Ah! you hope so. That's very interesting, but evasive. Possibly you are in the Diplomatic Service.

Prince. In a sense I am.

Baron. Indeed, I might have guessed as much, from one with a manner so—so polished.

Prince. So highly polished indeed, as to be extremely slippery. [CARDINAL chuckles, BARON looks at him, he then reads again.] And you?

Baron. Well, suppose you guess.

Prince. Judging from—

Baron. My personality.

Prince. Then I take you to be an entertaining, but unsophisticated detective.

Baron. [*Annoyed.*] Ha! That's capital!

Prince. By the way, you are not by any chance the Chief of Police, are you?

Baron. Why do you ask?

Prince. Only that the Cardinal told me I should possibly find that official in the garden, hunting for mare's nests. [*Exit, L., humming a tune.*]

Card. Eh? What was that he said last?

[*Rousing himself.*]

Baron. I prefer not to repeat it. It was stupid—untrue—and in short, a libel.

[*Exit, L., leaving CARDINAL alone.*]

Card. I'm afraid he's annoyed. Bernadine shouldn't betray my little confidences. It required such a mental effort to follow his subtle catechising, that I feel quite drowsy. It's a fatiguing day.

[*Reads two lines of Latin and closes his eyes.*]

ANGELA is heard singing in the distance, she continues her song as she enters, carrying fishing-basket. As she finishes she catches sight of CARDINAL.

Angela. Oh! His Eminence! and asleep—fast asleep! I mustn't waken him. [*Looks at CARDINAL.*] So we will be quite quiet and count the basket. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6—all my own catching, and here's one that he caught. [*CARDINAL looks.*] I tied a ribbon to it so that I should know it. It's quite tiny, and yet I think I like it better than the others. There's something odd in that—why should I? Oh! there you are, brown rabbit—waiting for your dandelion, are you? Then here you are. Now tell me, wise but greedy bunny, how is a girl to know if she'll ever fall in love or not?

[*During the above the PRINCE appears at back, and comes down behind her quietly.*]

Prince. By asking the man who has caused her any doubt on the subject.

Angela. Oh! I'd never do that. [*Turning quickly.*] Hush! [*Pointing to CARDINAL.*] He's fast asleep.

Prince. Why not try the old game with this blow-away, "I love him, I love him not," and so on?

Angela. No, I won't be responsible for any vegetable analysis of my private emotions.

Prince. Well, we won't quarrel. It's our last day together.

Angela. You are really sorry?

Prince. Sorry! Why, if the world were a playground, and you and I children in the sunshine, and nothing more—were you not the daughter of a king, and I so far below you—[*CARDINAL drops his book.*] I say, you're sure he's asleep?

Angela. Yes—quite—what were you saying?

Prince. Were you not the daughter of a king, and I so far below you, I'd ask for nothing but that you and I should go on playing for ever in these yellow fields and purple vineyards.

Angela. Yes, it's a nice idea, but don't you think it would get a trifle monotonous after—say—about seven years, especially in bad weather.

Prince. I believe that most married couples have experienced something of the sort, even in good weather.

Angela. We are not discussing marriage.

Prince. No! But why shouldn't we?

Angela. [*Looking at him earnestly.*] Do you know—you won't laugh at me, will you?

Prince. Of course not.

Angela. I think you are the most interesting man I ever—[*CARDINAL groans.*] I suppose there's no doubt he is asleep?

Prince. Let's make quite sure.

Angela. Yes. [*Rises and comes down to CARDINAL.*] Get me a blade of grass. Now——

[*Business; first she tickles his ear, then his chin, he moves as if in sleep.*]

Prince. It's all right.

Angela. Yes, quite all right.

Prince. You were saying?

Angela. I want to ask you something. Would you put duty—I mean the duty one owes to one's country—before——

Prince. Before?

Angela. Love.

Prince. Ah! I know what you are thinking of. I know that you shrink from this proposed marriage to Prince Victor. [*Taking both her hands.*] Don't Princess, don't shrink from it.

Angela. Well, really, I can hardly see what it's got to do with you.

Prince. It may have nothing to do with me as you see me now, but I—I want to plead my master's cause, in the interests of humanity.

Angela. What do you mean?

Prince. Not half an hour ago, telegrams came to the effect that risings had broken out on the frontier, and that eleven men had been killed.

Angela. Ah! don't tell me that!

Prince. Yes, it's true, and this will go on and on—[*a look at CARDINAL*—and on, until quiet is restored by some means. Then surely if an act of sacrifice on your part, whatever the suffering to yourself, can bring peace to the country, you will place patriotism on a higher plane than love can ever attain to.

Angela. You don't know what you ask.

Prince. I think I do, and yet I ask it.

Angela. [*Dreamily.*] Eleven silent homes. Yes!—of a sudden it all seems clear. It is my duty, and you—[*looking into his eyes*] you have shown it to me. But you ask me to leave a land of happy day-dreams, and enter willingly upon a life of suffering. What if I have already learned to love?

Prince. What, indeed!

Angela. Ah! listen! The workers are going home from the vineyards. [*PRINCE rises and goes up steps, ANGELA still remains, sitting R.*] Keep quite still! One can almost hear the words.

Prince. What are they?

Angela. They are singing,—

“ Sweet, I’m coming through the meadow,
Sleep the vines in summer dew,
And I see thee in the sunlight,
Waiting for thy lover true.”

How happy they are. Poor hard-working souls! Ah!
[*Rises.*] Yes, I’ll do my duty, and they shall still sing
their sunset songs, still rest in the shade of the vines.
For there are thousands of them, and I am only one—
a solitary girl. But ah! I wish that to-day, my last
day of freedom could last for ever. So linger sun, dear
sun—be late and lazy in your setting. [*Coming down.*]
Has it struck you how much bluer the sky is than it
used to be?

Prince. Yes, and I never breathed such glorious
air. I feel like a young Hercules.

Angela. So do I. [*Looks at CARDINAL.*] I never
saw such flowers as we have seen to-day, together.
[*Sits R., beckons PRINCE to sit and gives him flowers.*]
Do you know why I gave you the rosebud this
morning.

Prince. [*Sitting on her right.*] No! Why?

Angela. Because I had never seen such a splendid
one before, and I wanted to be unselfish and give it
away. And when you wore it, somehow it looked
more beautiful than ever. But everything has seemed
so wonderful since you came. The birds never used
to sing as they sing now. And wasn’t it fun to-day,
when we found the little waterfall playing a tune like
the love duet in “Tristan.” The odd thing is, that I
never thought the place so attractive before.

[*Song heard again.*]

Prince. It’s an ideal spot for lovers, isn’t it,
Angela?

[*CARDINAL opens his eyes wide, then closes
them again quickly.*]

• *Angela.* [*Remembering.*] Oh, hush! you mustn’t call

me that. I've been forgetting. I'm not free, and I owe a duty to others. How did you pronounce my name?

[CARDINAL *beats time to the singing.*

Prince. Ange——

Angela. No, perhaps you'd better not.

[*Turns and sees CARDINAL nodding in time to the music. Exeunt on tiptoe.*

Card. I haven't felt so young for years. I believe, had I been a layman, I could have made love almost as well, if not better.

Re-enter ANGELA, looking thoughtful.

Ah, Princess!

Angela. I have great things to tell you, Eminence. My eyes have been opened, and I shall prove myself a true daughter of my dear country.

Card. My child, you mean to——

Angela. Yes; I will marry Prince Victor.

Card. And what fairy godmother has wrought such a change in the heart of my daughter?

Angela. Well he—it—it wasn't exactly a god-mother, it was a man—a young man.

Card. [*Crosses to her, R. C.*] An agreeable young man?

Angela. Oh, very, and very good-looking. It was Count Bernadine.

Card. [*Sits on bank.*] Oh! he pleaded Prince Victor's cause, did he?

Angela. [*Kneels by him.*] Yes, and so beautifully. You can't imagine with what force and passion he pointed out my duty to me. I was quite carried away.

Card. And so, no doubt, was he.

Angela. And yet, father, I believe—oh! how shall I say it? that he—Count Bernadine—loves me.

Card. Is it possible? But surely my young friend hasn't presumed to make a declaration?

Angela. Not exactly. He's been wonderfully careful, but I think it's in the air.

Card. Ah!

Angela. You see, wherever I go you'll find him somewhere near. Don't look round, but I happen to know that he's watching us from the bank. I've guessed his secret from little things.

Card. Such as—?

Angela. Well, he seizes my hands and gazes into my eyes, where most people would only say "How are you?" Another odd thing is, that although he says he can walk a mile in twelve minutes, when we're together, it takes quite two hours and a half. You've no idea how marvellously he contrives that we should escape from everybody but ourselves. [*The PRINCE appears at back and coughs.*] You hear him? He thinks we don't know he's there, but I knew he was.

Card. Then I'll leave you. [*Rises.*] The holiday is all but over, and I want the last few hours to give you many happy memories. [*Turning.*] Ah! my dear Bernadine, where have you been?

[*ANGELA plucks flowers.*]

Prince. [*Coming down L. C.*] Oh, revelling in the scenery of Cassantra.

Card. And in which part of the picture do you find the greatest beauty?

Prince. In the foreground, just where the Princess is standing.

Card. With your leave, my daughter, I'll step out of the picture.

Angela. [*Retiring up C.*] Yes, yes, I know you're afraid of the damp. There's a dew on the flowers already. [*Gathers flowers.*]

Card. [*Bows to ANGELA, touches PRINCE on shoulder as he passes.*] Remember on no account must you disclose your identity to her until I tell you.

Prince. I have promised.

Card. She's a wayward child, and love is often ousted by pride.

Enter DUKE OF BERASCON, L., passing CARD.

Ah, Duke! [*The DUKE gives a low bow. Exit L.*]

Duke. The Queen Ferdinand has sent me to find you, Princess.

Angela. Then please don't.

Duke. Certainly not. I shall return without the least idea of where you are.

Angela. And if they send you again, I shall probably be at my devotions in the Oratory, and must not be disturbed.

Duke. Your devotions in the Oratory. Yes—I quite understand.

Angela. Thank you so much.

Prince. We shall be most grateful.

Angela. Grateful! This has nothing to do with *you*!

Duke. Certainly not, sir. I fail to see how you are to profit by the Princess's picturesque adaptation of the truth. [*Exit, L.*]

Angela. Of course not.

Prince. Are these for me?

Angela. No. Every flower has a meaning. [*Crosses to R.C.*] Do you know our language of flowers?

Prince. Not I.

Angela. Then take some of these and I'll teach you.

Prince. Yes, do. To begin with you might give me these forget-me-nots.

Angela. No, that oughtn't to be necessary.

Prince. Of course not. I beg your pardon.

Angela. Now give me one, and I'll tell you what it means.

Prince. Here is a rose, a deep red rose.

Angela. Oh, you mustn't give me that.

Prince. Why not?

Angela. Because it means you cannot live apart from me.

Prince. Then I do indeed give it to you.

Angela. How dare you say that? Haven't you been urging me to marry Prince Victor?

Prince. To marry him, yes, not necessarily to love him. Give me a flower and I'll tell you its meaning in Kurlandese. [*Takes one.*] This one, for instance, means that you wish to marry.

Angela. That's not true. You know it isn't. Take it back, please, I'll have this. [*Takes a calceolaria.*]

Prince. Why, you don't know what you've done. That's worse—the significance of that's enormous. It means that you love the human being nearest to you—[*she drops the flower*] and are ready to seal the compact with a kiss.

Angela. Oh! that's its meaning in Kurlandese, is it?

Prince. Yes.

Angela. Ah! Well, in Arcadian it means that you're an extremely forward young man. Besides, I believe you're inventing a language of your own. It's quite absurd that every flower I choose should mean I love you.

Prince. I wish I could invent a language to tell you all I feel, but there's no vocabulary in the world for that. But if I could give every flower in the garden a voice, I'd gather them, lay them at your feet, and they would cry, "He loves you! he loves you!"

Angela. Count Bernadine!

Prince. It's true. There come moments in our lives when the world drifts away and we float to a clearer air beyond it. I feel as if the wind that is touching us now had swept through a forest of roses and I hear a voice whisper, "The summer is passing, take her to your heart before the roses fade and die."

Angela. I seem to have read that somewhere.

Prince. Yes! You've read it in my eyes. Angela, I know I have urged you to marry a man, the mere sound of whose name is hateful to you, and I still ask you to make that sacrifice. But let us be lovers to-day, that each of us may carry in our hearts for ever, a memory pure and sweet. Angela, I love you.

Angela. I had a presentiment that you were going to.

Prince. And you?

Angela. I—I only know that I am trembling with a happiness so strange and new, that it almost hurts me. I want to cry out my secret to the sun, and whisper it to the silent things, the stars, and flowers, and pools of quiet water. For I can't keep it, I can't keep it. *[Lays her head on his shoulder.]*

Prince. My darling! *[Embraces her.]* I can't bear it, she's breaking her heart. I must tell her.

[Catches sight of CARDINAL, who has entered and is standing silently with his finger on his lip as if forbidding him to disclose his identity. Exit CARDINAL. PRINCE kneels and puts his arm round ANGELA.]

Angela. Dearest, I shall always be proud to think that I've been given the love of one, who, sacrificing himself, has urged me to do what I know to be right, and marry a—a—another—*[breaking down]* man. And in the days, darling, when we are both old and white-haired, we'll still have the memory of this quiet summer evening and the dear old garden where love first came.

Prince. Angela! *[Kisses her.]*

Angela. And to-morrow I shall be back in the hateful palace at Caron.

Prince. So shall I.

Angela. What?

Prince. I go in attendance on Prince Victor.

Angela. Ah! Then let our last good-bye be spoken there, in Caron.

Prince. Yes, yes.

Angela. Find your way to the old armoury an hour before the ball, and I shall be there. Promise.

Prince. Yes, I promise at any cost.

Angela. Hush!

Prince. What is it?

Angela. Voices! and coming nearer. I hear grand-

mother speaking—I mustn't be seen here with you—my eyes would tell them that I've been crying. Quick! down this alley. [*As if going*, R. U. E.]

Prince. No, no, you can't go there. I see Holdenssen. [*She comes down and looks; they cross stage as if going up L.*] The Cardinal!

Angela. No, that won't do. The servants are coming with tea. Oh, we are in a trap.

Prince. Let's face it out.

Angela. Face it out! That's all very well for you—you'll merely be ordered away, but I've got to live with these people. Tell me—can you climb a tree?

Prince. Why, of course I can.

Angela. Very well then, we'll hide in this one. You follow me—no, you go first. [*Business. PRINCE proceeds to climb up tree followed by ANGELA, during which the dialogue continues as follows.*] Now do be careful. Remember I'm below you.

Prince. Can I help you?

Angela. No, thanks. I'm getting on all right; but it's all most undignified.

Prince. I don't think that matters.

Angela. Perhaps not to you, but you forget I'm to be a queen, and queens oughtn't to climb trees.

Prince. There's a splendid leafy nook up here.

Angela. Then give me your hand.

Prince. There—and my heart goes with it.

Angela. Oh, please don't say that sort of thing now. I'm much too excited. Let us have an interval.

[*By this time they are seated side by side on a stout branch so arranged that they are in full view of the whole audience, but evidently concealed from the people on the stage below them.*]

Prince. I'll put my arm round you for safety, shall I?

Angela. Yes, I think you'd better—for safety, but not as a recreation. After all, one isn't up a tree every day—and it's just a little embarrassing.

Prince. Embarrassing—I like it.

Angela. So do I—awfully. But my conscience is horribly shocked.

Prince. Oh, that's all right. Conscience isn't really a hard taskmaster. He's so used to failures.

[*Kisses her hand.*]

Angela. Ah! if we could only make a little nest up here and live like two love-birds for ever—and ever—and—Hush! here are the tea-things.

Enter, L., four liveried Footmen with tea-tray, silver kettle, etc.

Good heavens! we'll be up here for hours. We shan't get any tea. The mere sight of it makes me hungry, especially that cake with the pink sugar. Do you really love me?

Prince. Dearest, with my whole heart and——

Angela. Well, don't shake the tree like that. Oh! here's someone—it's the Cardinal.

Enter CARDINAL, R.

Card. [*To Servants.*] I presume the tea-table is for their Majesties?

Serv. Yes, your Eminence. They're in the rockery close at hand, and will be here in a moment.

Card. Thank you. [*Servants withdraw L.*]

Angela. [*Gives a little cry.*] Oh!

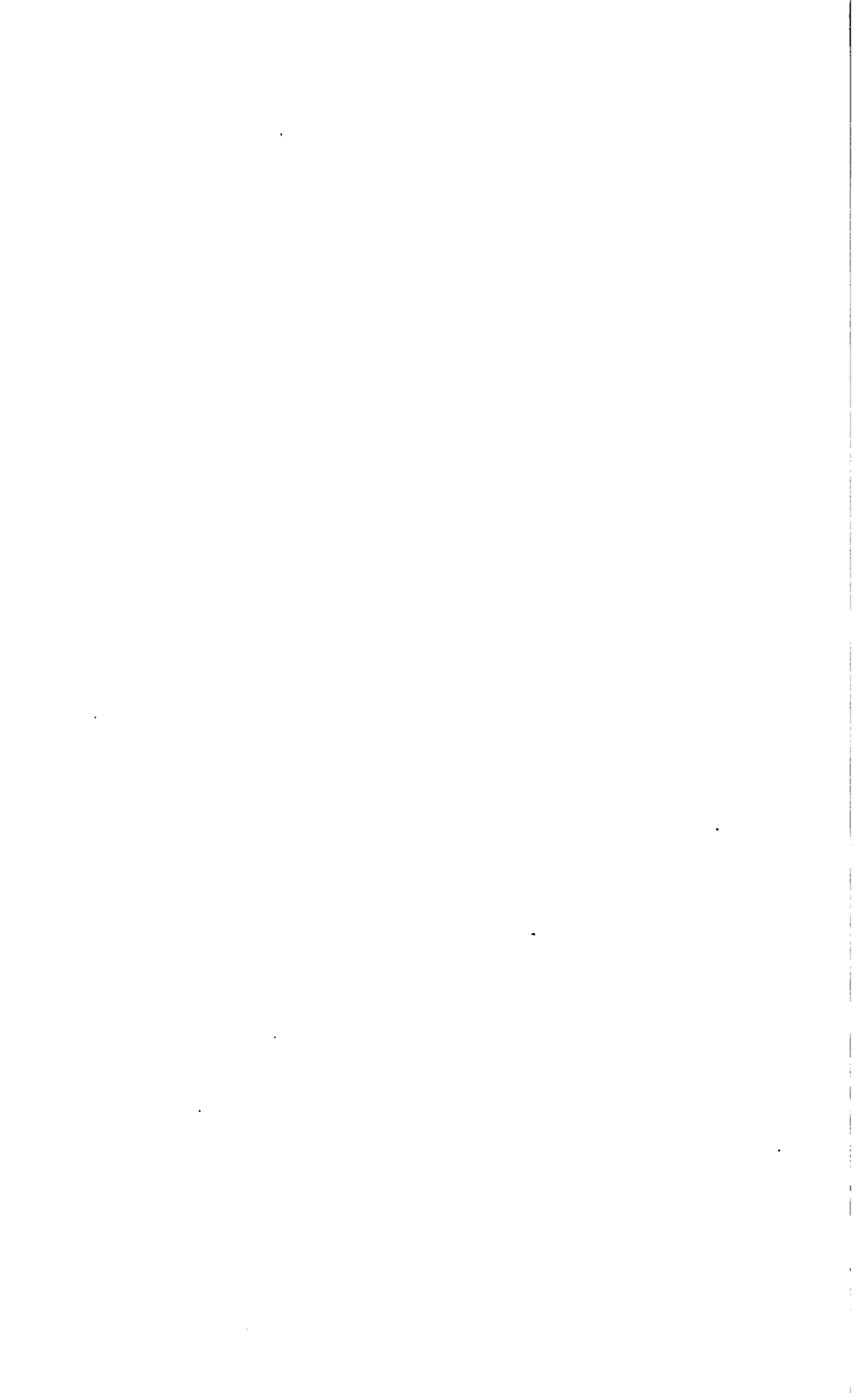
Prince. What is it?

Angela. There's a caterpillar on my neck.

Prince. Hush! He's heard us.

Card. [*Who has heard the voices and is looking up.*] I seem to know that voice, and, dear me [*looking up in tree*], what remarkable fruit this tree seems to bear. Four soles and heels—two large, two small—Merciful powers! Princess! What are you doing?

Angela. Oh, please don't give us away, Eminence.



You see, we were merely strolling about, and we got up here to see the view—only you can't, because it's so absurdly leafy—and we're taking a rest, because it's so awfully hot, and we don't want the others to know—as there isn't a chaperon up here, and grandmother is so awfully particular.

Card. I see. The most natural thing in the world, and I suppose that as once I was young myself, I must keep your secret. But you'll get no tea.

Angela. No. I thought perhaps you might help us to get that cake. [*CARDINAL looks for cake.*] Underneath the table—the one with the pink sugar. It looks so tempting.

Card. And temptation means a foretaste of the sins we hope to enjoy. [*Gets cake.*] Now, Bernadine, can you catch?

Prince. Yes.

[*CARDINAL throws cake which PRINCE catches.*]

Angela. There! Now I've got it. Thank you ever so much. You quite understand that we are only up here because we are awfully tired, and can't help it.

Card. That is perfectly obvious. I can imagine nothing more restful than your present position. Are you quite secure?

Angela. Oh yes, I'm holding on to the tree, and he's holding on to me.

Card. Then keep quite still. They're coming.

Enter L., KING, QUEEN, QUEEN-MOTHER and PRINCE CHARLES.

Queen-M. [*To CARDINAL, who is bowing low.*] Ah, my dear Cardinal, you'll have tea with us, won't you?

Card. I shall be delighted, ma'am.

King. [*As they sit.*] You can't imagine, Cardinal, how I shall miss the daily intercourse that you and I have enjoyed here. A King has so few friends of his own rank. There are only a matter of ten sovereigns of any importance in Europe, and we are so scattered.

Queen-M. And the expense of royal meetings is so enormous.

Queen. Now, Charles dear, let me see you drink your tea prettily.

Charles. I don' wan' to drink prettily, I wan' a piece of cake.

Queen. You must first eat your bread and butter.

Charles. I don' wan' to eat bread and butter.

King. You must and you shall eat bread and butter. As your father's son, it is your duty to do so. Margaret, be firm with the child, as I am. You must learn obedience, my child, in the interests of both your country and your digestion.

Queen-M. By the way, where is Angela? [*The couple in the tree clutch each other suddenly. To CARDINAL.*] Have you seen her?

Card. Er—yes—I saw her a few minutes ago, here.

Queen-M. Oh, really? And was she alone?

Card. Not altogether. I was with her.

Queen-M. And no one else?

Card. Yes. Now I think of it, my young friend, Bernadine, was somewhere near.

Queen-M. I thought so. Really, my dear Louis, you must employ a more athletic chaperon than I can ever hope to be, for to be in charge of Angela involves competing in a sort of obstacle race. [*To CARDINAL.*] Where did they go?

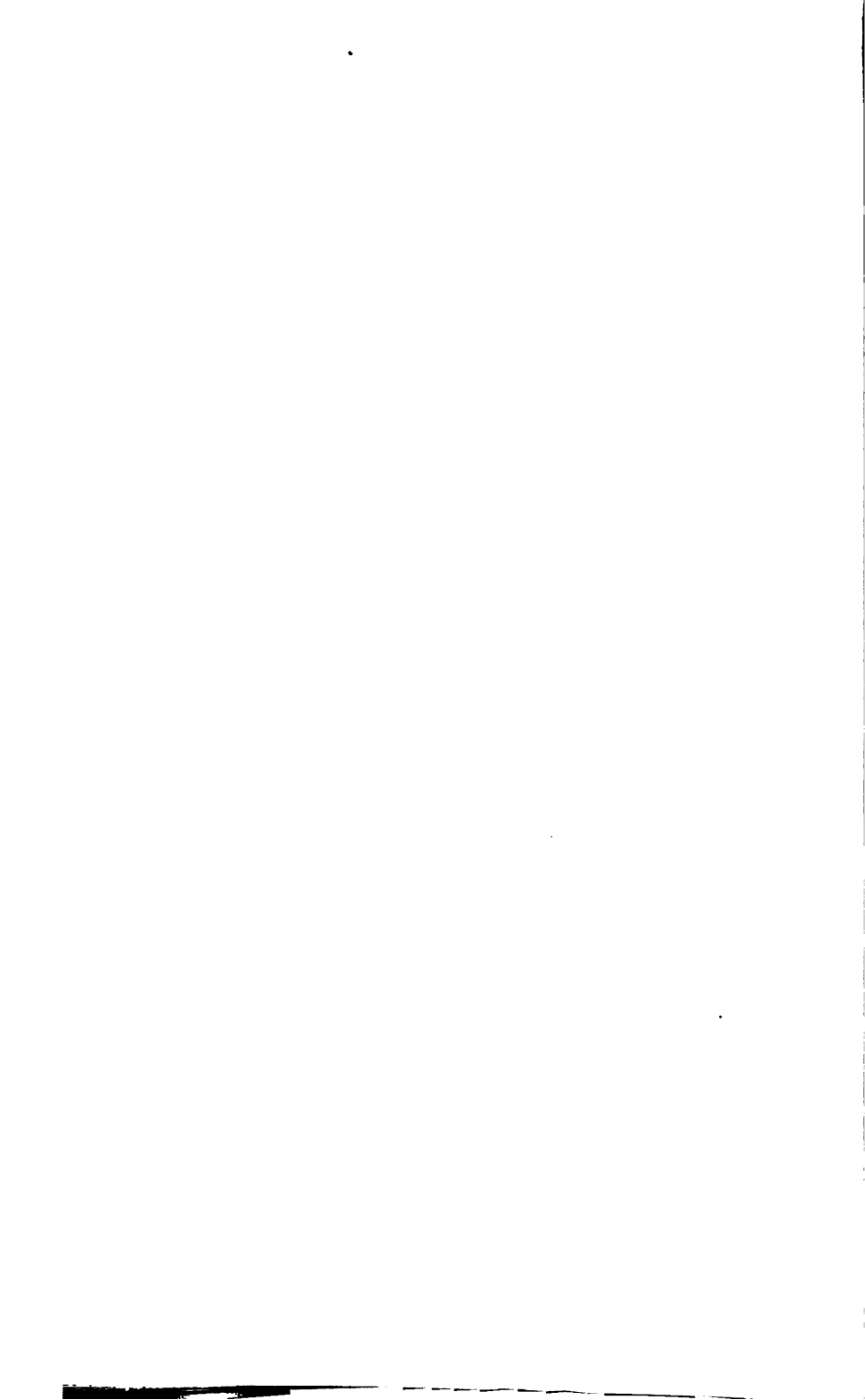
Card. Er—er—well, I last saw them disappearing into the trees.

Queen-M. She is a most trying child, and I'm extremely sorry for her future husband.

King. Really, my dear mother, why sorry?

Queen-M. Because she appears to be quite ready to love anybody except the person who has been officially selected to receive her affection.

King. It's all very annoying. Truly the English poet was right when he wrote "uneasy lies the head that wears a crown."



Queen-M. Still it would be much uneasier were the crown removed.

King. Yes, for nations have a careless, but painful trick of removing the head as well.

Queen. But we have no proof that she's in love with Count Bernadine, have we, Cardinal?

Card. I hardly dare to express an opinion on the sentiments entertained by one so exalted as your daughter.

King. Your Eminence's reticence is perfectly natural, for it must be obvious to the most casual observer, that I am gently, but with an iron hand, moulding my daughter's destiny. Only last night she kissed me several times, and intimated that she believed she was beginning to understand what love meant. I at once cabled that expression of opinion to Prince Victor to Kurland.

Charles. Boo-hoo.

Queen. Charles, what *are* you crying for?

Charles. Gan-mother promised me a cake with pink sugar.

Queen-M. Yes, by the way, I especially ordered a cake with sugar of roses on it. Where is it?

[Great excitement in the tree, the cake comes down with a flop behind the CARDINAL.]

Card. It seems to have rolled here ma'am.

[Picks it up and places in on a plate and hands it to QUEEN-MOTHER.]

Queen-M. But someone's been eating it, and there's none of the sugar roses left. Was anyone here before we came?

King. *[With a smile.]* His Eminence was near the table.

Queen-M. But I'm quite sure his Eminence would have waited for us. Angela must have been here. Ah! here comes the Duke.

Enter DUKE OF BERASCON.

Will you be good enough, Duke, to send some of the servants to look for Princess Angela?

Duke. Certainly, ma'am. *[Exit, R.]*

King. Possibly Angela prefers her last day here in solitude. She must naturally be agitated at the near prospect of the arrival of Prince Victor to-morrow.

Queen-M. If that youth had the vaguest idea of Angela's irresponsible and hare-brained temperament, he would be so agitated that he wouldn't arrive at all. Fortunately I believe he's a very weak and easily-managed creature.

Card. I never observed these traits in his youth.

Queen-M. No; at times the clergy are singularly unobservant.

Queen. Louis, I never remember a year when the trees were so leafy. *[Looking up.]*

King. Yes, there's great luxuriance. This one for example.

Card. And have you seen the beautiful lights in the distance just there?

[Drawing away their attention. Agitation in the tree.]

Queen-M. It's a most remarkable tree. There's no breeze and yet it keeps on rustling. *[Looks up.]* Cardinal, what are those four flat things.

Card. Er—er—they resemble—er—

Queen-M. Feet!

[The feet are rapidly drawn up as far as possible, CHARLES rises and puts down plate.]

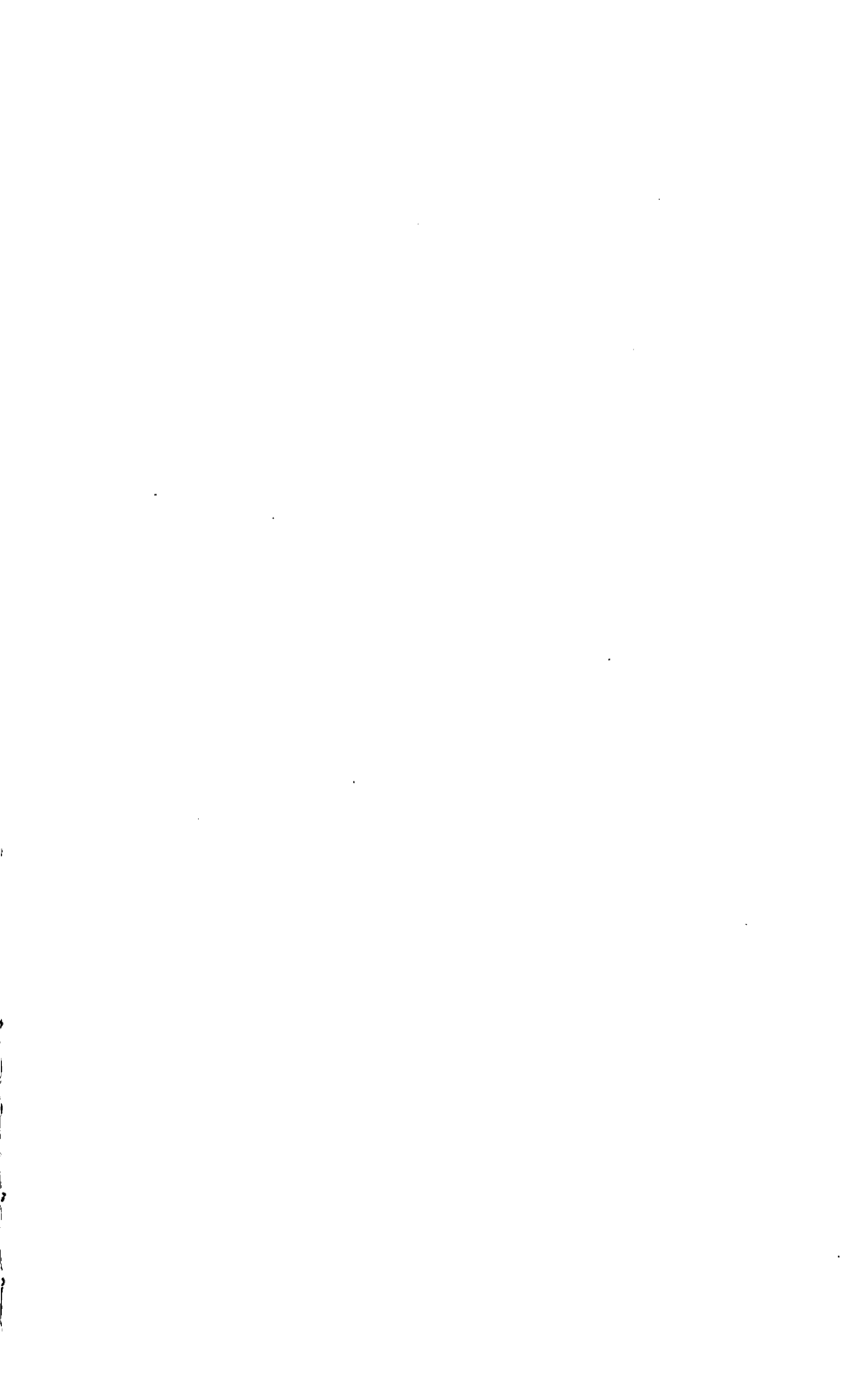
Queen-M. *[Turning to the KING.]* Louis, there are human beings in that tree.

King. Oh, nonsense! It would be a gross breach of propriety for anyone to dangle over us during a meal.

[ANGELA gives a cry.]

Charles. *[Gets on chair.]* I see naughty Angela.

Queen. Angela! Are you there, child?



Angela. Ye-es.

Queen-M. This is perfectly appalling.

King. [*Severely.*] What are you doing?

Angela. I'm having a rest.

Charles. I wan' to go up the tree.

Queen-M. Get down, child. But, Louis, she's not alone.

King. Oh! you are not alone up there?

Angela. Well, not exactly. It didn't seem quite safe to be alone, and so——

Queen-M. Of course—what have I said all along? Count Bernadine is with her.

Prince. It's quite true, ma'am. We've been playing a practical joke, that's all.

Queen-M. And yet I don't observe that any of us are excessively amused.

Charles. I wan' to go up the tree.

King. Come down, both of you. Ever since you arrived at the years of understanding, Angela, I have implored you to remember the high station to which you have been called. Yet, you persistently lower it.

Angela. Father dear, all my imperfections of character are hereditary.

King. You accuse me.

Angela. No, not you, father dear. Hereditary failings skip a generation.

Queen-M. An insolent indictment directed at myself.

King. I have said "*Come down.*"

Angela. But I can't. How can we possibly do it if people are looking.

King. Oblige me, Count Bernadine, by removing your arm from my daughter's waist.

Angela. I won't allow him to. If he does I shall fall.

Queen-M. Oh, my dear Louis! This is treason!

Queen. My child, my child, you are breaking our hearts.

Angela. [*Tearfully.*] I know I am. And you're breaking mine.

Queen-M. Where is your boasted firmness now, Louis?

King. I am just going to exhibit it in its most marked form.

Charles. Father, I wan' to go up the tree?

Queen. Silence, child!

[During the rest of the scene sunset effects.]

King. For the third and last time, "Come down."

Angela. We are coming.

Queen. *[Agitated.]* No, no, remain up a moment longer, the servants are coming, and we mustn't have a scandal. *[Goes up L., and sits, taking CHARLES with her.]* Charles, you are not to speak.

[All group themselves as if nothing had happened.]

Enter four liveried Servants.

King. Well?

Serv. Your Majesty, we have looked everywhere, and her Royal Highness is not to be found.

Enter R. the DUKE OF BERASCON.

Duke. I have just seen her Royal Highness, sir.

King. Indeed, where is she?

Duke. I have this moment left her in the oratory, at her devotions.

Charles. Oh, I say!

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE I:—*The Armoury of the Palace at Caron. A fine oak-walled room, the walls of which are profusely covered with trophies of arms and armour. At back, C., a mullioned window. L., two doors, between them an immense fireplace. R., a recess fitted as an oratory and partly curtained. Old oak furniture and polished floor.*

As the curtain rises, ANSELM is discovered reading by fire. Reading-lamp on table by his side. He puts down book and makes up fire. Ten o'clock strikes.

The upper door, L., opens and ANGELA enters. On seeing ANSELM she stops, hesitating, then comes forward.

Angela. [Coming down.]



ATHER ANSELM!

Anselm. [Turning.] Princess!

Angela. Why—what are you doing here?

Anselm. I am waiting for his Eminence. The Armoury has been placed at his disposal, all the other rooms being required for to-night's ceremony.

Angela. That's rather inconvenient.

Anselm. Do you wish to see his Eminence?

Angela. No, it doesn't matter. The fact is, I had arranged to say good-bye here to—to a friend.

Anselm. And you wish me to leave you?

Angela. Oh, there's no particular hurry, as he isn't here yet, and I shall see so little of you now. You

know, of course, that to-night I shall be formally betrothed to Prince Victor?

Anselm. Yes, I know it.

Angela. You can't conceive how wretched I am.

Anselm. A great happiness is nearer to you than you think.

Angela. Ah! so you believe, but the only happiness that I shall ever know is, that for my country's sake I have made myself utterly miserable. I shall see little of you now—but you'll remember me in your prayers, won't you?

Anselm. Yes, Princess, always. Yet, after to-night, we shall never meet again.

Angela. Never?

Anselm. To-morrow I enter the monastery of St. Anthony.

Angela. But that is a living death, is it not?

Anselm. In a sense it is. It is a long good-bye to the outer world.

Angela. Ah! Well, you've one consolation. You haven't got to marry anybody.

Anselm. No, I'm quite free from the responsibility.

Angela. I wish that women could go into retreat when they don't want to marry. By the way, what is the time?

Anselm. [*Looking at eight-day clock.*] It's a quarter past ten.

Angela. Oh, then — perhaps — if you wouldn't mind——

Anselm. We'll say good-bye.

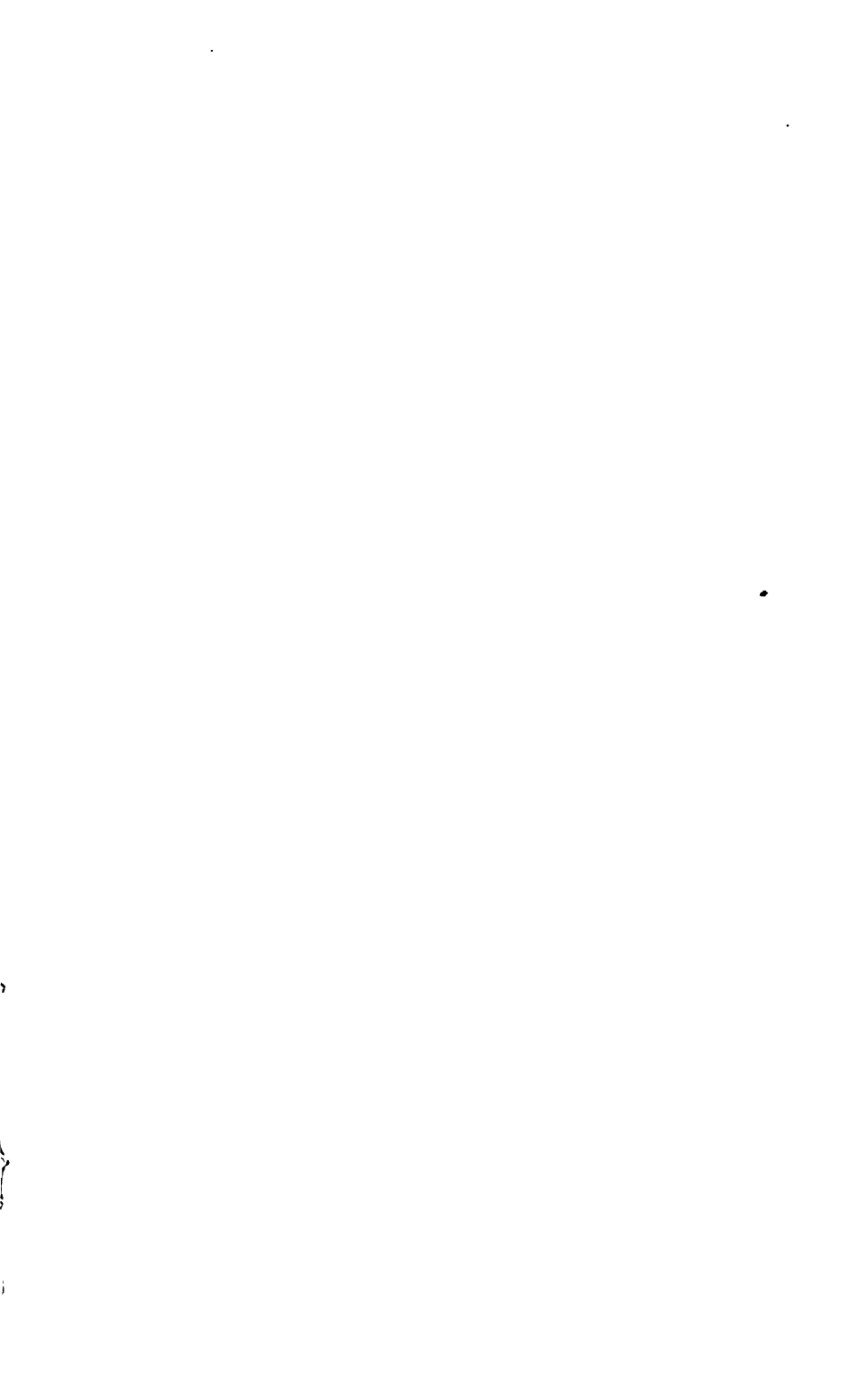
Angela. Yes, please.

Anselm. Then good-bye, Princess, good-bye!

Angela. We're both in the same boat, Father Anselm, and on the prow is painted the word "unhappiness."

Anselm. Yes, Princess, but we know that the rudder is duty.

Angela. And *you* will step ashore to the silent shadow of the monastery, I to the feverish glitter of





the world. But there will always be a link between us.

Anselm. A link?

Angela. Yes, for no one can touch or break the chain of the sorrows that are known only to the sufferers. Is this your book?

Anselm. Yes.

Angela. Then may I have it as a keepsake?

Anselm. Will you take it?

Angela. Thanks.

Anselm. Good-bye, Princess, good-bye!

Angela. Good-bye. [*They clasp hands and look into each other's eyes. Exit ANSELM, L.*] Why doesn't he come? Why doesn't he come?

Enter COUNTESS CARINI, L. U. E.

What is it, Countess? Surely I asked you to wait for me in the ante-room?

Countess. Yes, ma'am, but unfortunately the Queen Ferdinand gave me most peremptory orders that I was not to leave you even for a moment.

Angela. That's so like grandmother. But, Countess, I'm going to take you into my confidence. I know I can trust you. Count Bernadine is coming here to say good-bye—and I want to be alone with him, if only for a moment.

Countess. But is it safe, Princess?

Angela. Safe? What do I care? I tell you I *will* see him alone. Oh, by the way, have you seen the Crown Prince?

Countess. Not yet. It seems he arrived quite quietly and unseen by anyone a few hours ago, and I hear he will not leave his rooms until just before the ceremony.

Angela. What noise is that?

Countess. It sounds like someone beneath the window. [*Goes to window, opens it, and looks out.*] Good heavens! there's a man climbing up by the ivy.

Angela. A man! Let me see. [*Looks out.*] Why, it looks like—oh! it couldn't be—but, yes it is. Now, Countess, if you'll leave me for a moment.

[*COUNTRESS draws herself up in surprise.*

Angela. It's only Count Bernadine, coming to—to call.

Countess. As you wish, ma'am. [*Exit, L.*

Angela. [*Moving over to the oratory and clutching the curtains.*] I'm trembling like a leaf.

[*PRINCE appears at window, enters, and sinks on seat, chuckling.*

Prince. Are you there?

Angela. Yes, I'm here, but who are you?

Prince. It's I, Bernadine.

Angela. Oh, is it? Well, you know, we are very old-fashioned in Arcacia, and visitors as a rule come in by the door.

Prince. Ah, yes, Princess, but I assure you——

Angela. Oh, of course, the window is much more romantic.

Prince. You don't understand.

Angela. No, I don't. Please bolt the door.

Prince. [*Bolts door.*] You see, when I reached the steps that lead to the door—[*indicating door*—this one, I suppose—I suddenly became aware that I was being watched by Baron Holdensen. On this I made a bolt. He followed me. Then came a game of hide-and-seek in the garden. I found myself beneath the Armoury window. The ivy was thick and strong, and it didn't seem a great feat to climb to the window—so here I am!

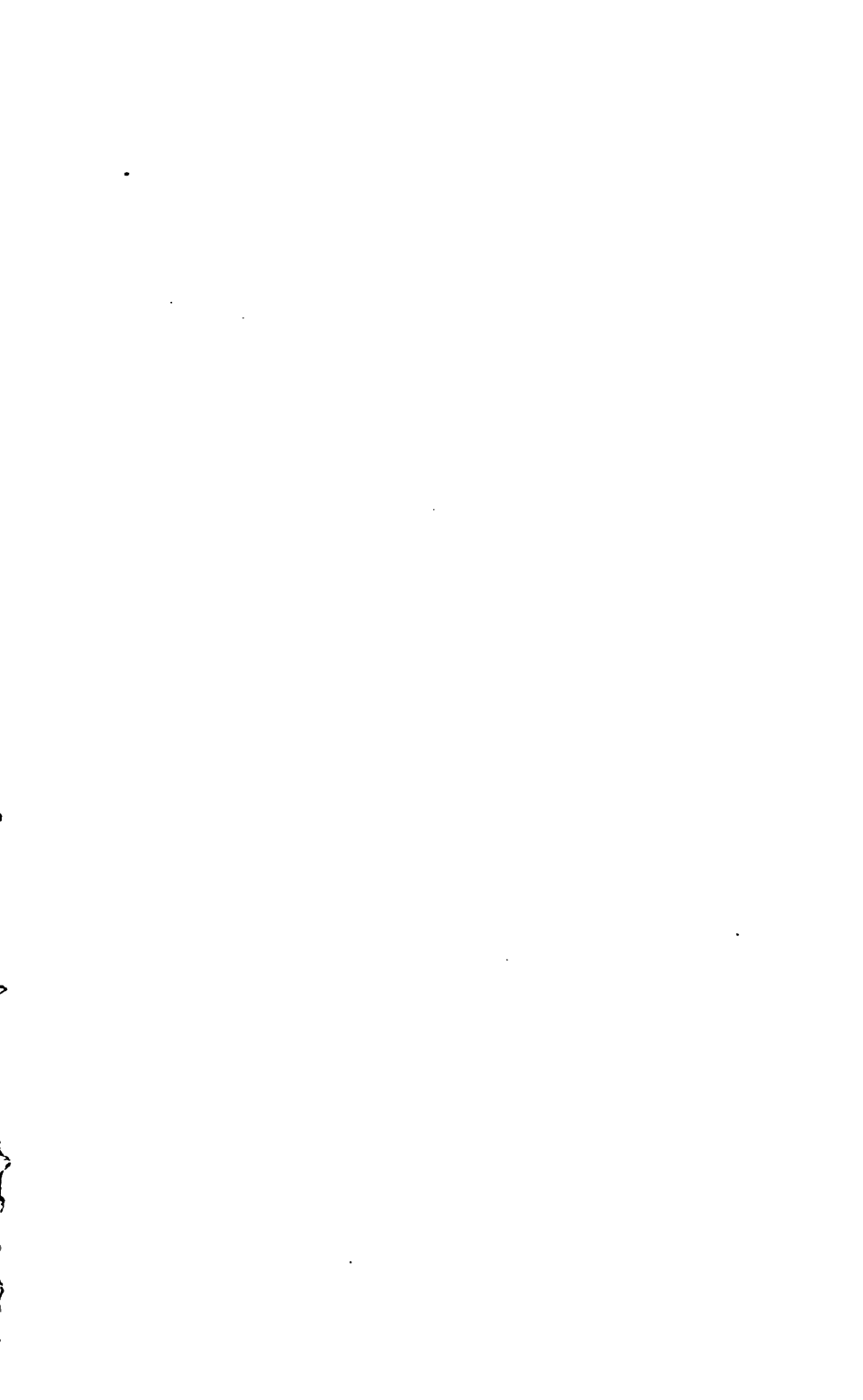
Angela. And you risked all this to bid me good-bye?

Prince. [*Putting his arm round her.*] My angel!

Angela. Yes, your angel! that's the worst of it! I can't be more than that to you.

Prince. Still that's a good deal.

Angela. There's so little solidity about an angel. Why, you're in uniform!



Prince. Yes. You see, wherever Prince Victor goes, I must be with him.

Angela. That's what I shall find so terribly trying; to give my hand to one man, while my heart is given to another who's standing quite near. You'll keep out of the way as much as possible, won't you?

Prince. You'll never see me so long as you're with Prince Victor.

Angela. And even that seems a pity, doesn't it? I should like to meet you occasionally—inadvertently. But how does it happen that you're wearing this star? I thought it was only given to royalty.

Prince. Oh, not in Kurland—you can buy it there—it's a democratic country, you know, like France for example, where if you say you're a nobleman, "ipso facto"—you *are* one.

Angela. I can't imagine how you can be so light-hearted when you know we shall never meet again! How can I believe that you really love me?

Prince. [*Warmly.*] Love you! I, who have no other thought but for you? I, who in seeing you, knew that I had met my fate! I, who cannot even tell you who I am——

Angela. But, surely, you're Count Bernadine!

Prince. Yes, I know that.

Angela. Then what are you talking about?

Prince. You'll know to-night.

Angela. To-night!

Prince. Angela, I know you to be a woman of sudden impulse, and I fear that love may turn to bitterness if you find that I have in any way deceived you. And if to-night you find that I am not what I seem to be, I ask you to remember that true love knows no laws, and must fight as best it can to gain its ends.

Angela. Must it? Then you have been deceiving me?

Prince. Yes.

Angela. How?

Prince. I can't tell you.

Angela. Very well then. Good-bye.

Prince. Ah! don't leave me like that; surely you can trust me?

Angela. I decline to trust a person who admits that he has been deceiving me. But your confession makes the trial of to-night's betrothal lighter. The first favour that I shall ask of Prince Victor, is your removal from his personal staff.

Prince. [*Nettled.*] But still you'll keep on loving me?

Angela. How dare you say so?

Prince. You never loved me so well as you do at this moment.

Angela. How like a man—how mean. Understand me! Even though at the present moment I may be dying to throw my arms round your neck and cry "I love you," you will observe from my not doing so, a certain self-restraint, a resolve never again to yield to such weakness, however delightful it may have been. And I shall endeavour to be worthy of Prince Victor's devotion.

Prince. Are you sure he'll love you?

Angela. He's got to—officially. He may detest me in private, but at least he must adore me in public. [*Handle of door rattles.*] Hush!

Prince. What is it?

Card. [*Heard off.*] If you'll permit me your Majesty—

Angela. Can't you hear? That's the Cardinal's voice.

King. [*Heard off.*] It's most extraordinary.

Prince. And I hear the King's.

Angela. They mustn't see you. You must go!

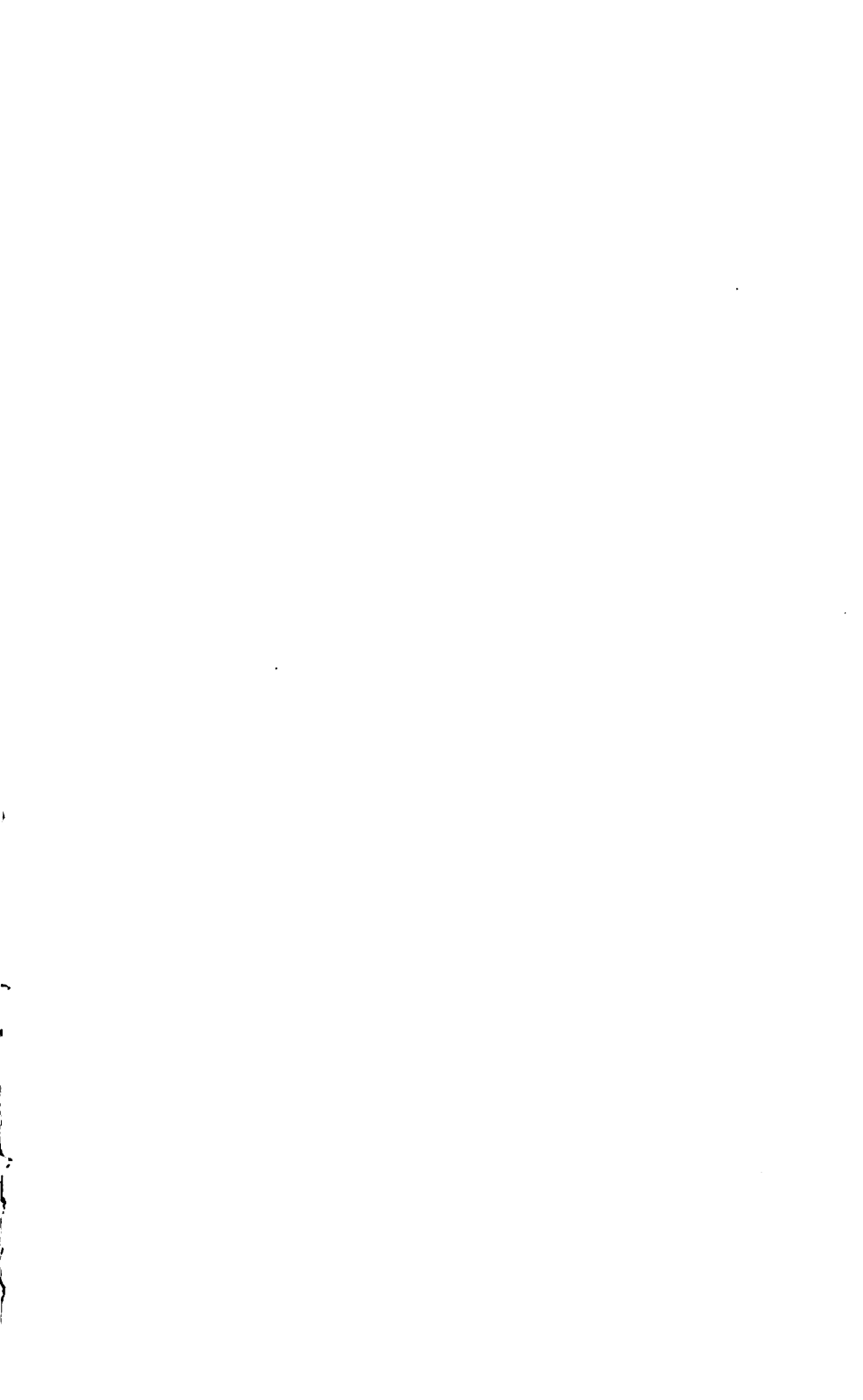
Prince. Yes! Here's a door.

Angela. No, no! The Countess Carini is there.

Prince. Then the window.

Angela. Yes, quickly!

Prince. [*At window.*] Merciful powers! I daren't. I see Holdensen in the lamp-light below. He's watching this window.



Angela. [*Dragging him to the oratory.*] Then here, quick! Don't speak—they are at the door. [*The door is tried and found locked—knock.*] Come in!

King. The door is bolted.

Angela. Oh, is it? How stupid of them.

[*Opens door.*]

Enter KING and CARDINAL, L.

King. So here you are?

Angela. Why, you're in uniform!

King. Yes. I've just returned from the night manoeuvres. I wonder if you are aware, Angela, that you are a source of perennial anxiety to your parents?

Angela. I know that my parents are a source of perennial suffering to me.

Enter QUEEN-MOTHER.

King. I will report that remark to your grandmother.

Queen-M. There is no occasion, Louis, I have heard it. Your daughter, in addition to being extremely imperfect as a girl, is perfectly impossible as a Princess.

King. I was not aware that you had followed us, mother.

Queen-M. Very likely. But here I am and here I remain, until I grasp what is going on.

King. Your rebellious tone and attitude, Angela, force me to believe that in sparing the rod, I have spoilt the child.

Angela. Then, father, try a change of tactics. Spare the child and spoil the rod.

King. Why are you alone here?

Angela. I'm not exactly alone. The Countess Carini is waiting in an adjoining room. But I wanted to

think, to prepare myself for the awful ordeal to which you are forcing me.

King. I see. That brings me to the object of our seeking you. [*CARDINAL moves over and takes ANGELA'S hand gently and kindly.*] You have very dutifully consented to a formal betrothal to-night, and the usual slight ceremony will take place when you meet Prince Victor. But, if you wish it, you may meet him privately beforehand, in your mother's drawing-room.

Angela. No—no—no. I should only break down—but if I meet him before the eyes of everybody, well—I am your daughter and I shall go through with it. I have realized that I am not considered a creature of flesh and blood, that I am only a political doll.

[*Sounds from the oratory.*]

King. What's that?

Angela. Oh, it's nothing. You hear all sorts of queer noises in the Armoury.

Card. And they say it's haunted, you know.

Angela. Yes, no doubt, by the ghosts of all the dead-and-gone princes and princesses whose hearts have been broken as mine is breaking to-night.

King. My child, you are only approaching the crisis that is inevitable in the life of any beautiful young woman.

Queen-M. Exactly. I suffered terribly when it was ascertained that your grandfather had succumbed to such attractions as I possessed. No doubt the beauty for which I was then famed has lost its freshness, but I trust there are still some evidences of charm of expression.

King. There appears to be a disturbance at the window.

Card. Yes, and if my eyes serve me right, I see friend Holdensen.

King. This is very remarkable.

With a great clatter, the BARON enters through window, almost bumping against the KING, whom he does not see in the dark.

Baron. Who are you?

King. Well—it's of no importance, but we are the King.

Baron. The King!

Queen-M. And be good enough to realize that I am here. I have no desire to be bumped.

Baron. Ten thousand pardons, sir. The room is dark—I did not see you.

King. Quite so. But let us tell you, that although there is no written order to the effect, it is understood in this Palace that windows exist as windows, and are not to be confounded with doors. It is a small point, perhaps, but we are scrupulously firm in matters of domestic detail.

Baron. Let me explain, sir.

King. I should like it of all things.

Baron. I'm afraid, sir, my explanation will come in the nature of a shock to you—and I fear also to his Eminence.

Card. I will try to bear it.

Baron. For some time past I have suspected this so-called Count Bernadine of being a Kurlandese anarchist.

King. Bless my soul!

Baron. To-night, by accident, I found him lurking in a corridor of the Palace, and thence I tracked him to the gardens. Judge of my surprise when I saw him climb through this very window.

Queen-M. I take it all this occurred after you had dined.

King. A most extraordinary tale! You arrested him, of course?

Baron. Not exactly, sir. I had only reached the investigation stage. I got the fire escape, climbed up it, and here I am.

Queen-M. Yes, here you are. The question is, what are you going to do, and when do you propose to go away?

King. But, my dear Holdensen, you must be mistaken. Our daughter has been here for quite——

Angela. Quite half an hour.

Baron. Indeed, sir, I can hardly believe we are mistaken.

Card. Then you infer that he is here now?

Angela. Oh, how dare you!

King. Angela, do you know anything of this?

Angela. Father, can you suppose that your daughter would allow anyone to come before her so uncere-
moniously?

King. No, my child, I cannot.

Queen-M. I can.

Baron. It is possible that he entered unobserved. With your Majesty's permission, I will make a search.

King. We have no objection.

Angela. We can all help—I'll begin with the curtains here.

Queen-M. This is all shockingly undignified.

[*They all begin to look about them, with the exception of the KING and CARDINAL.*]

Angela. [*Pretending to search behind the curtains.*] There's nobody here.

Baron. No, a mere curtain would scarcely afford sufficient hiding for a rascal of the type we are hunting for.

Card. Possibly, Baron, you've come to the wrong window.

Queen-M. It would be amazing if a high official of police hit on the right one.

Baron. [*Who has wandered about, peers behind curtains of oratory and sees PRINCE.*] Excuse me—[*turning to the others*] I've found somebody whom the Princess has apparently overlooked.

Angela. How dare you, when I told you no one was there?

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Baron. Do you mind coming out?

[*PRINCE steps forward.*]

King. But, unless we are very much mistaken, this *is* Count Bernadine.

Prince. Yes, sir, I am Count Bernadine.

Angela. And this is all my fault. Oh, if I had only known. I never dreamt that our innocent farewell would end in this.

Baron. I was perfectly certain that it was through this window that he passed. It was impossible to mistake it.

Prince. The whole affair lies in a nutshell. I can explain it all in a moment.

Card. I assure you, sir, that everything will turn out exactly as you wish. Strange as it may seem, what has happened is part of my purpose.

Queen-M. Will somebody kindly explain what is going on? A scene like this may quite possibly be the prelude to a European war. For instance, Louis, I remember when you were cutting your teeth, and were a most fractious child——

King. I really must ask you to refrain from irrelevant family details.

Baron. With your permission, sir, I have a painful duty to perform. [*To PRINCE.*] Count Bernadine, I arrest you in the name of His Majesty.

Angela. Oh!

Baron. On the charge of conspiring to abduct, and hold as prisoner, his Royal Highness, Prince Victor of Kurland.

Card. Perhaps her Royal Highness will be good enough to withdraw.

Angela. Shall I go, father?

King. By all means, child. I've a vague idea that you oughtn't to be here at all.

Angela. [*As she goes out with CARDINAL, L.*] I only came to be alone—Ah? Cardinal, my heart is broken.

Card. And I am going to mend it.

[*Exit ANGELA, L. CARDINAL closes the door and returns.*]

King. We are waiting.

Card. Yes, sir. I fear your Majesty must refuse to sanction this arrest.

Baron. And why, pray?

Card. Because, with praiseworthy but misdirected zeal, you have been endeavouring for the last few days and to-night have nearly succeeded in arresting the Crown Prince himself. [Pause.]

Omnes. { Merciful powers!
The Prince himself!
Why! your Eminence!

Queen-M. I thought so. I knew it all along.

King. This is too much. We will not endure a situation, the significance of which is denied us. [To BARON.] Leave our presence, Baron.

Baron. There appears to be some trifling error——

King. We repeat—leave our presence. You will be called upon for an explanation later.

Baron. My humble duty, sir.

Queen-M. [To BARON.] What have you been doing? Something silly, I feel sure.

[Exit BARON, L.]

King. [Looking at CARDINAL and PRINCE.] Well?

[The CARDINAL is about to speak, but the PRINCE stops him.]

Prince. The fault is mine—I came to see—I remained to love.

King. But—but—but—Cardinal——

Card. Your Majesty—my little scheme.

King. Scheme—eh? Oh! ah! [Gives his hand to CARDINAL.] My good Cardinal, you are a second Machiavelli! [Crosses to PRINCE.] So you are Prince Victor?

Prince. You forgive me, sir?

King. Can you assure me that you have gained my daughter's love?

Prince. I thought I had, sir, but now I'm afraid I've lost it.

King. Lost it?



Prince. Yes, sir. Before you came, she told me her one ambition was to forget me.

King. Dear, dear.

Queen-M. The whole matter ought to have been left to me. Of course she'll hate you when she learns how you've tricked her.

Card. I feel sure, ma'am—for your diplomacy is a household word—that you advise that the Princess be left to find it out on meeting his Royal Highness.

Queen-M. That is my advice, is it?

Card. Yes, ma'am.

Queen-M. Thank you. I didn't recognize it.

[A clock strikes the half hour.]

King. It is half-past ten, and we must be ready by eleven. We must hope for the best. And for the future, I shall read King Solomon's injunction as—"Put not your trust in princes"—unless manœuvred by a diplomatic cardinal.

Queen-M. Or if there be a queen-dowager at hand, put your trust in her.

[CARDINAL opens door, L., with a low bow.]

The KING and QUEEN-MOTHER passing out; PRINCE also bowing low.

Card. And now, Prince, for the removal of your moustache.

Prince. Yes, of course I must appear "in propria persona." I'll go to my rooms at once.

Card. *[Moving towards upper door.]* There is no occasion to go so far. I took the liberty of making all the necessary arrangements. *[Opens door and calls.]* Adolphe!

Enter Two French Barbers, dressed entirely in white; one carrying white sheet and towel, the other a mirror, silver bowl with boiling water and shaving utensils, all glittering on a tray.

Monsieur le Comte est prêt à se faire raser. My own barbers, Prince, and I trust you will honour them by accepting their services.

Prince. This is extremely thoughtful of you, Cardinal.

Card. Old age finds its chiefest pleasure in removing the troubles of younger folk. And I knew there would be little time to spare. [*To ADOLPHE.*] Dépêchez-vous autant que possible, c'est à dire, sans déranger Monsieur le Comte.

Adolphe. Votre Eminence peut compter sur nous.

[*A chair is placed facing the table. Candles are lighted. The PRINCE seats himself, the sheet is tied round him, one Barber makes a foaming lather, the other prepares to shave him. The CARDINAL stands R. C. takes the breviary which hangs at his side in his hands, and reads, his lips moving.*

Barber. Does the Count prefer warm water or cold?

Prince. Hot, please. I've been in it for days.

CURTAIN.

SCENE 2:—*A sumptuous vestibule. At the back C. a deep alcove filled with palms and flowering plants, amongst which are groups of white statuary. This alcove is hung with many-coloured lamps. R.C. folding-doors show the entrance to a brilliantly lighted ball-room. Between these doors and the alcove is the throne. The floor of polished oak, effect of moonlight in alcove. As the curtain rises eight gorgeous Footmen in liveries of royal scarlet and gold are grouped about. At each folding-*

door two stand with tall gilt rods. The whole interior is profusely hung with garlands of red, white, and pink roses. The doors, the dais, and the alcove are banked up on either side with masses of flowering exotics.

The DUKE OF BERASCON enters, followed by two A.D.C.'s, L., all in full cavalry uniform. They silently inspect the decorations, etc.

Duke. The arrangements seem to be quite complete.

A.D.C. Arrangements do, as a rule. It's when the function begins, that we generally find the most important details have been overlooked.

Duke. Ah! here come the ladies.

Enter, R., the COUNTESS CARINI and two other Ladies-in-waiting.

Countess. My dear Duke, you've made the palace a dream of beauty! I suppose you designed all this yourself?

Duke. Well, it's really the work of the chief gardener, but of course I take the credit of it—that is to say, if the King approves. If he doesn't, then I let the gardener have it.

Countess. In fact, you are a born courtier; which means, a man who does nothing so gracefully that he appears to be quite indispensable.

Duke. We shall have quite an exciting evening. I hear the happy couple have never even seen each other, but we're not supposed to know that.

Countess. And so, quite naturally, it's in all to-night's evening papers. You know, I can't help thinking something's happened. I saw Baron Holdensen leave the Armoury in a state of extreme, but suppressed excitement.

All. Not really?

Countess. He was followed shortly after by the Queen Ferdinand; she flew, or I should say waddled into the Queen's boudoir, and reduced the poor Queen to tears in a moment. One scarcely dares to say so in the Palace, but royalty is very quaint in its emotions, isn't it?

Duke. Yes, their idiosyncrasies are interesting. For instance, when they travel incognito, they are excessively annoyed if they are not recognized by everybody.

Countess. Then I'm told that the Queen Ferdinand complained at the last Court function, that the trumpets that heralded her approach, were not nearly loud enough.

A.D.C. Hush! Hush!

[*Announced off.*] His Excellency the Ambassador from His Majesty the Sultan of Turkey.

Enter the Turkish Ambassador, he shakes hands with the DUKE, and then joins the group and talks to the COUNTESS CARINI. The following are announced and join the groups that are now forming over the stage, and enter into conversation. The chatter rises in volume until the whole room is talking volubly.

His Excellency the Ambassador, from His Majesty the King of England, and Lady Herbert Wyndham Stapleton.

The Count Verensa. The Countess Verensa.

His Excellency the Ambassador, from His Majesty the King of the Belgians.

The Baron Holdensen.

His Excellency the American Ambassador, and Mrs. Vanderdyke Q. Cobb.

Countess. [*Shaking hands with the American Ambassador.*] How do you do, Mr. Vanderdyke Cobb?

Cobb. How do you do, Countess? I hear there is to be quite an interesting ceremony to-night?

Countess. Oh, very. Of course you've never seen the betrothing of a Princess of Arcacia?

Cobb. No. In America it only requires two to carry out the business, and any one intruding would have a bad time.

Countess. With us, as soon as a royal wedding is arranged, the couple meet—as it were officially—and in the presence of the entire Court, give a formal kiss of betrothal. The ceremony was originally instituted in the twelfth century.

Cobb. That's just where you Europeans differ from us Americans. You're always busy resuscitating the dead-and-gone past, while we're preparing to pulverize the future.

[*Announced off.*] His Excellency the Minister from the Brazils.

His Serene Highness the Prince of Monte Casino.

His Eminence the Cardinal Casano.

Enter CARDINAL followed by ANSELM.

Card. Ah, my dear Lord Herbert, how well you're looking!

Lord H. Thanks to your heavenly climate.

Card. Quite an interesting occasion this, isn't it?

Lord H. Most interesting. My only regret is one of jealousy. I confess to wishing that so charming a Princess had been won by one of our English Princes.

Card. Yes, and your Princes make such admirable husbands. But I imagine that the run on them is so great, that at present, they're all either married or engaged.

Lord H. Yes, they're extremely popular—and unfortunately in these matters, the demand cannot create a supply.

[*A fanfare of trumpets.*]

Enter Lord Chamberlain, followed by several A.D.C.'s and Lords-in-Waiting.

Lord C. [Announcing.] Her Majesty Queen Ferdinand.

Enter L., the QUEEN-MOTHER and Suite. All bow low. QUEEN-MOTHER passes to R., and stands at foot of dais.

Queen-M. What miserably feeble trumpets. They sound as if I were some obscure Grand Duchess.

Duke. They are the same trumpeters, ma'am, that officiated at His Majesty's Coronation.

Queen-M. Then they don't improve with age.

Duke. I deeply regret it, ma'am, and I shall reprimand the Trumpet-Major for his premature decadence.

Lord C. His Royal Highness, Prince Charles Ferdinand. *[Fanfare of trumpets.]*

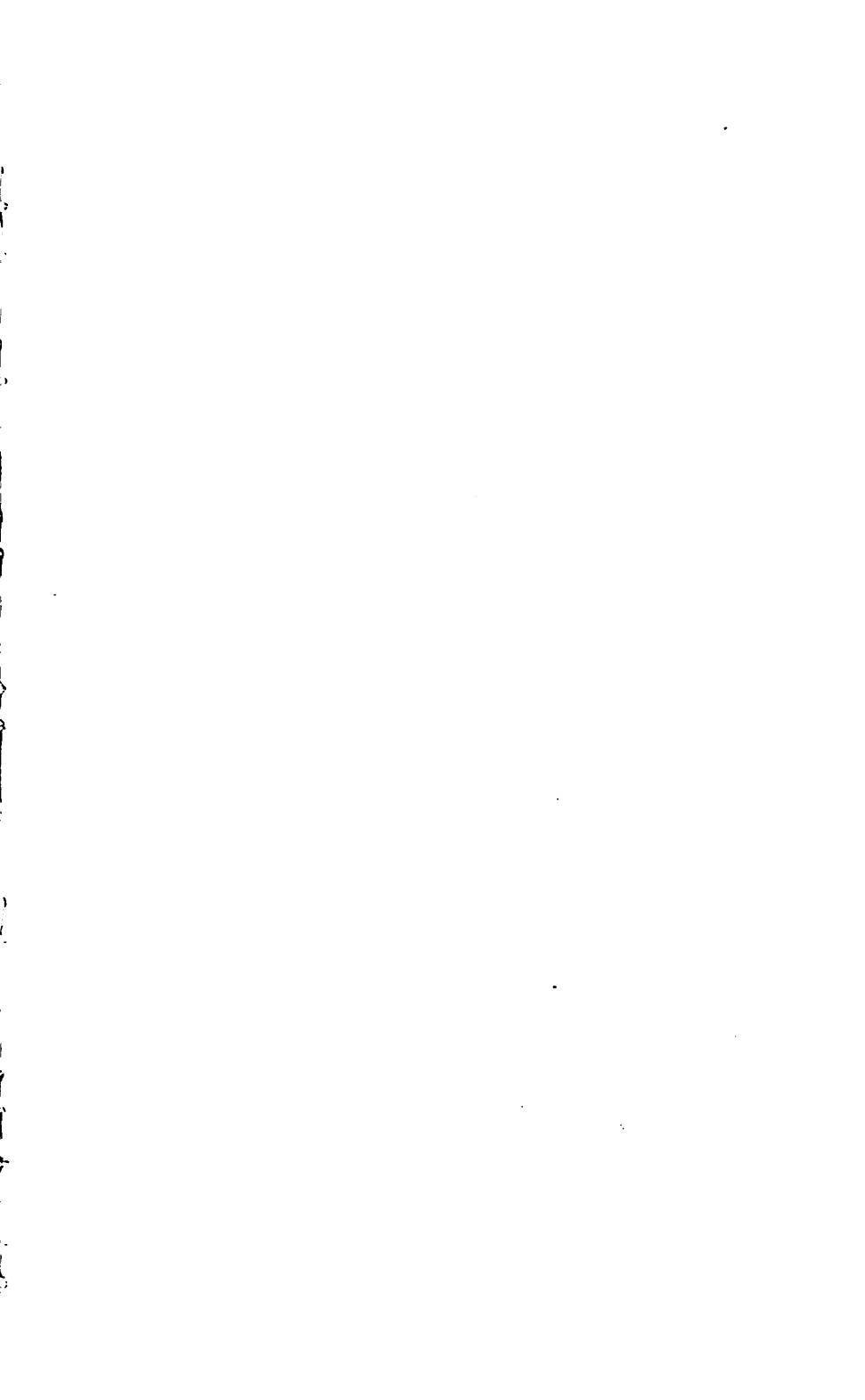
Enter PRINCE CHARLES, followed by DUKE, who has gone out to meet him.

Charles. Oh, Duke, I've forgotten my handkerchief. Will you get me one?

Duke. Yes, sir. *[Exit, L.]*

[CHARLES bows to the different groups of people and goes up, R., to the QUEEN-MOTHER, and kisses her hand. Fanfare of trumpets, and the KING and QUEEN and Suite enter, L., and proceed to dais. All bow low. The DUKE OF BERASCON follows the KING to dais and stands at foot of steps.]

King. [To LORD CHAMBERLAIN.] My Lord Chamberlain! We are ready to receive His Royal Highness the Crown Prince of Kurland.



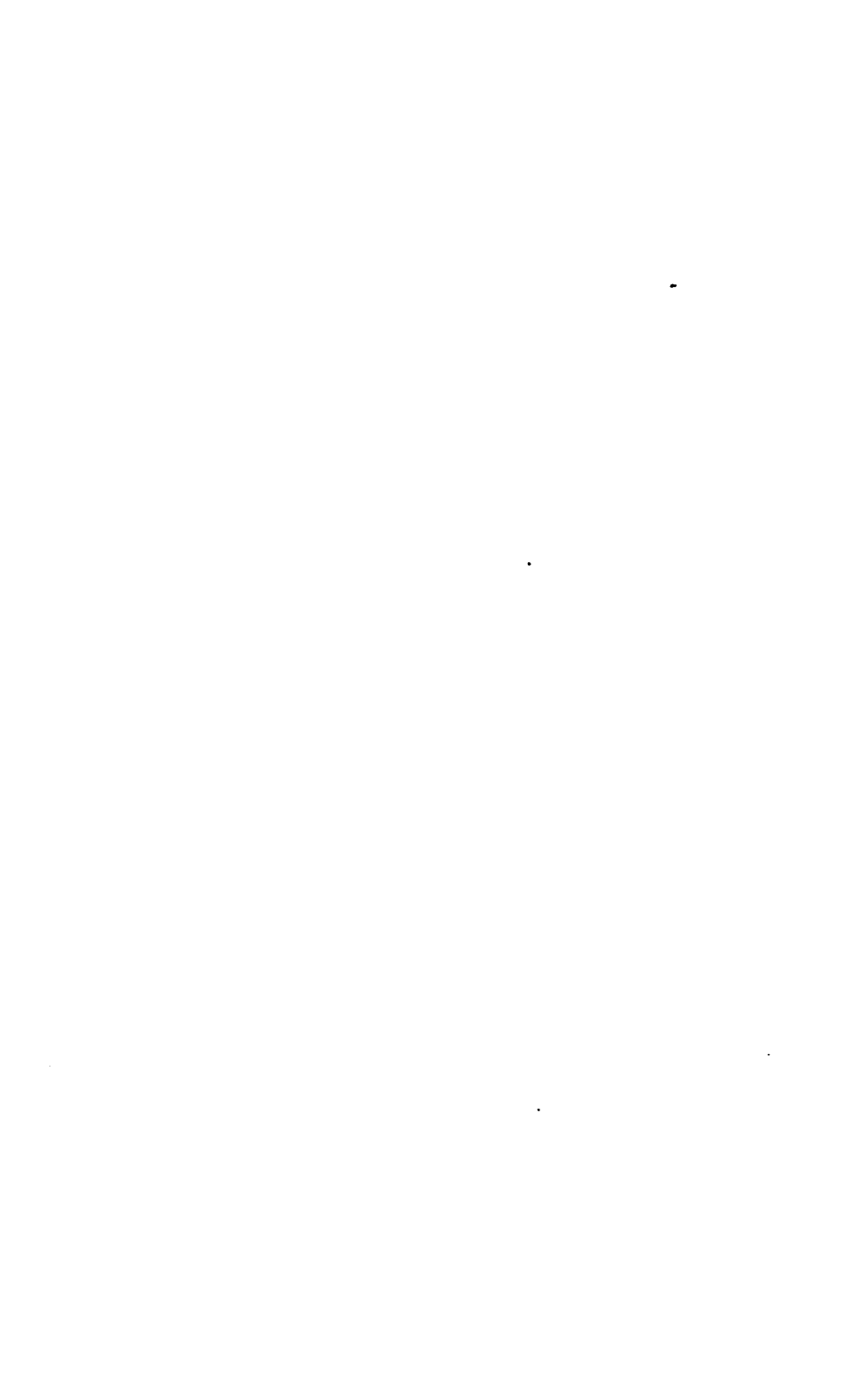
[LORD CHAMBERLAIN goes over to opening, L. A fanfare of trumpets, and enter, L., the CROWN PRINCE and Suite. The Lord Chamberlain presents him to the KING and then conducts him to L. C. of stage.

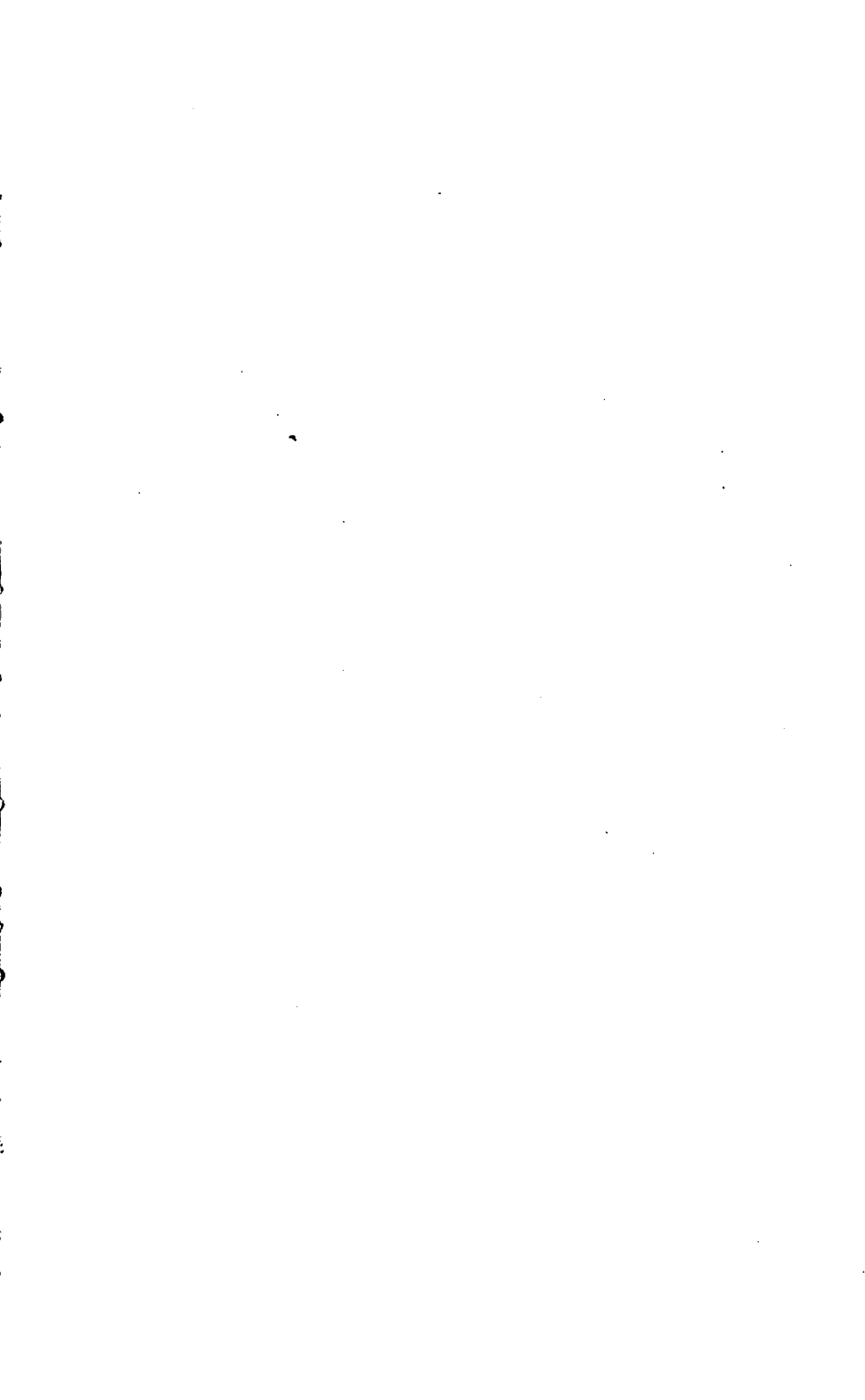
Enter R., the PRINCESS ANGELA and Suite. She is very pale and her eyes are on the ground. The KING leaves the dais and leads ANGELA to the PRINCE. She extends her hand and he kisses it; then, very slowly their eyes meet. A look of bewilderment comes into ANGELA's face, then a dawning intelligence, and finally with a soft smile her head sinks on the PRINCE's breast.

CURTAIN.



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